

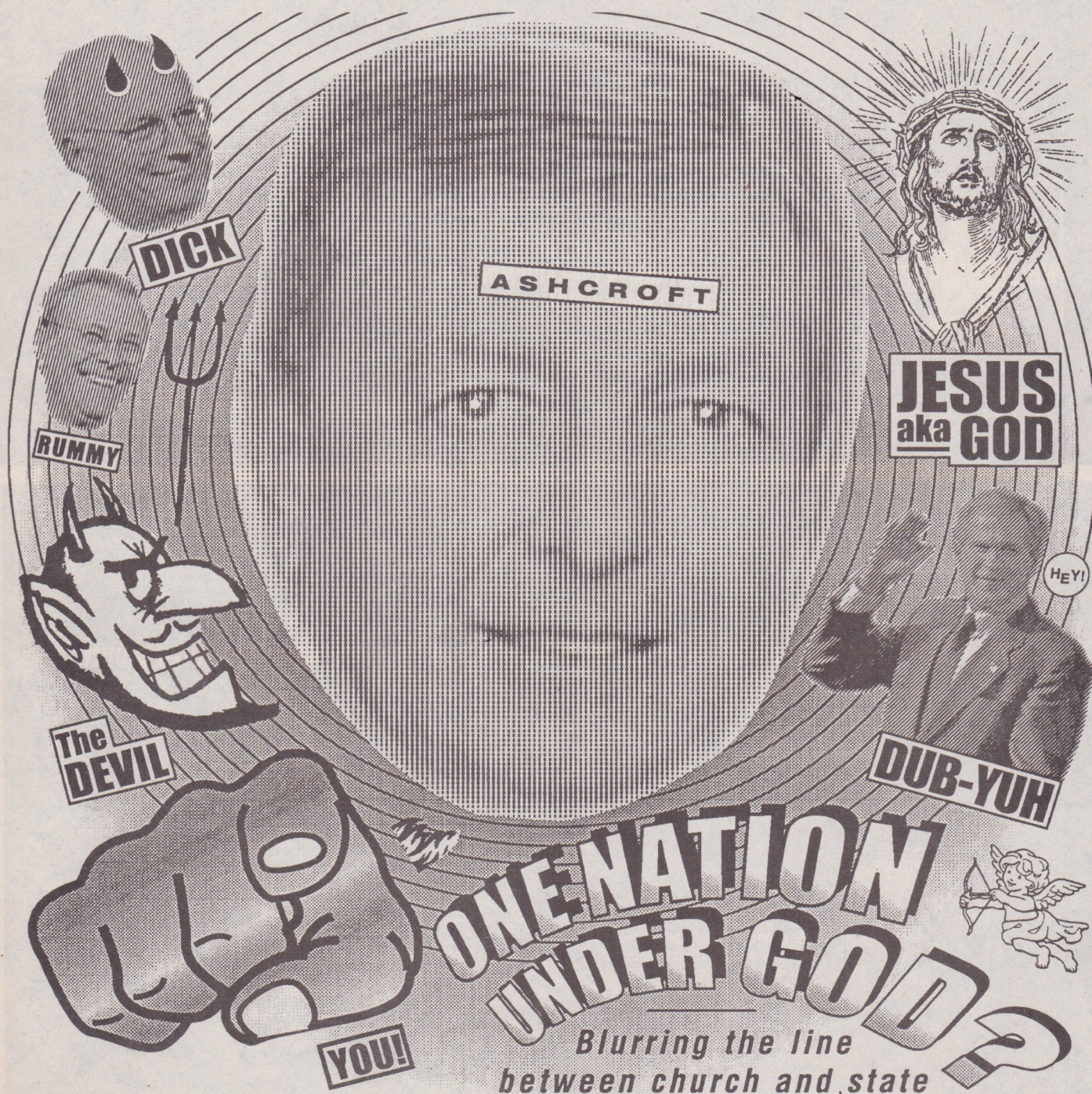
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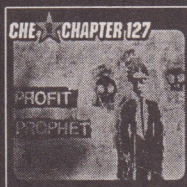
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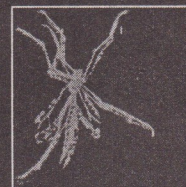
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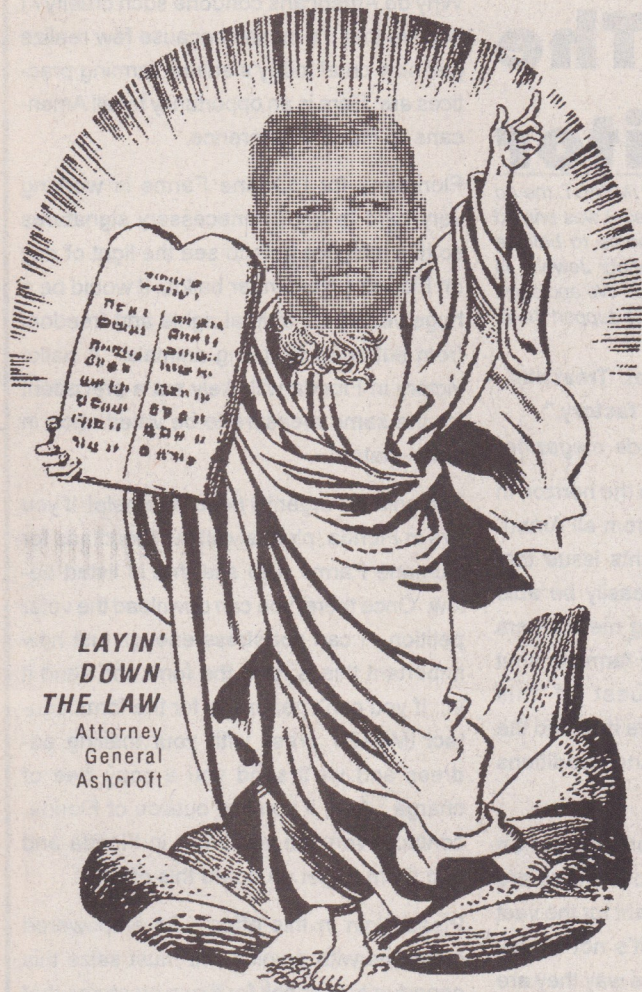
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things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 38 • APRIL/MAY '02



art by tom hope

**LAYIN'
DOWN
THE LAW**
Attorney
General
Ashcroft

ONE NATION UNDER GOD?

*Blurring the line between
church and state*

by Elizabeth Moore

By keeping a clearly defined line between church and state, religious liberty is protected from interference from the government. If this is one of the ideas our country was founded on, why is religion suddenly so ubiquitous in the public sector? • PAGE 26

"Those who try to stifle the vibrancy of our democracy and shield policies from scrutiny behind a false cloak of patriotism miss the real value of what our troops defend and how we best defend our troops. We will ask questions and we will defend our democracy." -- Senator John F. Kerry (D-MA) March 2002 speech

"And I have no doubt that every new example will succeed, as every past one has done, in showing that religion & Government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together."

-- James Madison, letter to Edward Livingston, July 10, 1822

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IMPACT[®] press

covering issues the way the media should

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A Fact from IMPACT: In medieval times, church bells were often consecrated to ward off evil spirits. Because thunderstorms were attributed to the work of demons, the bells would be rung in an attempt to stop the storms. As a result, numerous bellringers were killed by lightning.

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



From The Editor

Editor's Note: In the last issue of IMPACT, the ad for Snooty Jewelry (see facing page) was printed incorrectly and may have led some to believe they sold animal products. Snooty Jewelry is 100% vegan owned and operated. We apologize and encourage IMPACT readers to support them.

"Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory."

Hog Farm Management trade magazine

There is a rare opportunity on the horizon in Florida and help is needed from all Americans. This is an animal rights issue that every human being should easily be able to support. No one is asking meat eaters to give up flesh or for factory farms to shut down. The simple request of this groundbreaking ballot initiative is to end the inhumane, cruel, painful living conditions of pregnant pigs.

The effort seeks a ban on 'gestation crates'—barren metal enclosures where breeding pigs are kept pregnant for the vast majority of their lives. And it's not simply about the confinement, but the way they are confined: crates are just two feet wide, and the pigs cannot even turn around. They live in these conditions for years, birthing as many as 10 different times.

Due to the extreme confinement of these crates, pigs suffer from crippling foot and joint disorders, muscle weakness, and lameness. They develop sores on their bodies from constantly rubbing against the bars of their enclosures. Pigs confined in gestation crates experience chronic stress, frustration, depression, and other psychological disorders. They routinely exhibit neurotic coping behaviors, such as repetitive bar biting, sham chewing, and head waving. Gestation crates are so cruel that they have been outlawed in other countries,

but tragically, they remain common in the United States.

Why do Americans condone such cruelty? I believe that it's mostly because few realize just how cruel today's animal farming practices are. Here is an opportunity for all Americans to make a difference.

Floridians for Humane Farms is working very hard to get the necessary signatures so this initiative gets to see the light of day on Florida's November ballot. It would be a huge victory for animal rights and freedom from suffering for living animals. A ballot victory in Florida will likely set a precedent for the same measure to be voted upon in other states.

The animals urgently need your help! If you live in Florida, please visit the Floridians for Humane Farms web site that is listed below. Once there, you can download the voter petition. I can not stress enough just how important this is: sign the form and send it in. If you can't get online for the form, contact IMPACT press with your mailing address and we'll send you a copy free of charge. And, if you live outside of Florida, contact everyone you know in Florida and beg them to get on board this effort.

Please join in this effort. As empowered creatures with a voice, we must seize this opportunity to speak for those creatures that cannot speak for themselves.

• by Craig Mazer •

Make an IMPACT

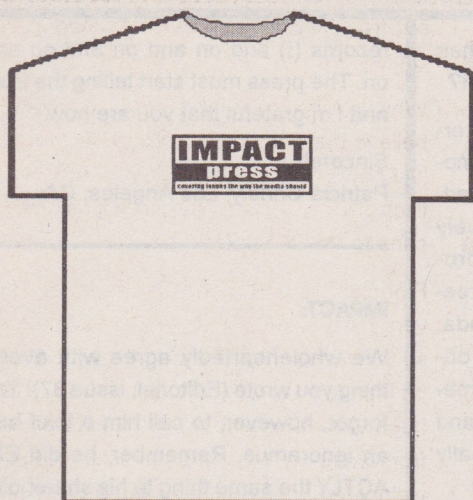
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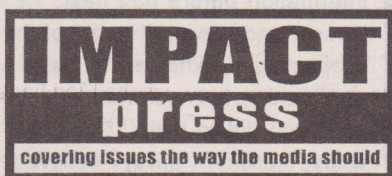
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IMPACT:

Great editorial (Issue 37)! Bush is without doubt the WORST president in American history, going beyond the ineffective administrations of Grant and Harding, even beyond the belligerency and mean-spiritedness of Reagan's administration! He is the worst of the worst. Let us hope that the Enron Scandal will prove his (and Cheney's) undoing, and that impeachment is not far away!

Sincerely,
Stephen Clayton
School of Journalism, Univ. of Missouri

IMPACT:

You are a Moron! The things you state as facts (Editorial, Issue 37) are a confused jumble of half-truths and outright lies! I am disgusted by the actions of those of you in the media that express your biased opinions from such exalted positions! Wake up, the only reason you have the ability to voice these positions is because of men like Mr. Bush and Americans before him. He knows, as the American public knows, what is right and what is wrong without a poll. The things you know but deny! I suggest you try to spend time rewriting the history of the former president!

Chuck Yeiser
Miami, Florida

IMPACT:

A fine editorial (Issue 37). However, I would go beyond 'embarrassment' and add that the Bush administration is a threat to the American way of life. Any and all opposition is put down as un-American and un-patriotic while the press is giving a free pass to this 'imperialist' group. Information from the White House is scarce at best - everything seems to be cloaked by national secu-

rity needs. Even Congress has seen their power eroded. Where is the oversight?

Most troubling is the apparent lack of organized opposition. Where is the Democratic Party? There seems to be no leadership. Has Republican spin effectively silenced all rational debate? Compromise has come to mean absolute agreement with the administration's agenda. Anything less is labeled bipartisan obstructionism. It's way past time for someone, or better, several someones, to stand up and let the public see what is really going on before it's too late.

Our country is being run by and for big energy (witness the new Afghanistan contract for a pipeline previously awarded to Argentina by the evildoers of the Taliban. Fortunately we got rid of them!) and big business. The apathetic people of the country need to have the facts in their face, and soon!

Cathy Zaloga
Hampton Bays, NY

IMPACT:

(Re: Editorial, Issue 37) Why are the approval ratings so high? Who does the polling? What questions are asked, precisely? How much of this "approval" is really just standing behind the leader at "war"? And when will people realize that that this is not a war in any sense except that the Bush group calls it that? Why hasn't the anthrax mailer been found? Where is Bin Ladin? Mullah Omar? Why aren't the Saudis "evil" while up to their eyebrows in terrorist activity? Why is it said we were successful in Afghanistan? When winter's over, we'll see.

Bush was not elected, yet occupies the presidency. Everything that follows this enormity is fruit of the poison tree. Bush calls himself a Christian while he mongers war; he rants about his integrity and values while he, his wife, his siblings and all their children have nasty arrest

records (!) and on and on and on and on. The press must start telling the truth and I'm grateful that you are now.

Sincerely,
Patricia Christy, Los Angeles, CA

IMPACT:

We wholeheartedly agree with everything you wrote (Editorial, Issue 37)! You forgot, however, to call him a thief and an ignoramus. Remember, he did EXACTLY the same thing to his shareholders, (dumping his shares with inside information before bad news was released, and leaving the rest of the unsuspecting stockholders in his oil company holding the near worthless shares) as Enron did to theirs. Our fine SEC, whose mission I always believed was to protect investors not crooks, was aware of these transactions and surprise, surprise, did nothing!

I'm sure that many millions of Americans are just as alarmed and disgusted by the arrogance and corruption of this administration as we are. But with the endless propaganda and pro-Bush spin of the entire mainstream media, we fear that this band of thieves and scoundrels will be able to continue merrily on their way until we all are under a complete and fascist police state!

I hope we're wrong!

Susan & Louis Sanchez
Boynton Beach, Florida

IMPACT:

There's nothing novel here ("Evolution Without God", Issue #35) to one who has read at all extensively on this topic. But this is as succinct and cogent an exposition as I have seen. My first look at Impact Press. I am imPressed!

Dudley Duncan

Speak Your Mind. ■ ■

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

IMPACT:

I don't know how you reach the majority of people with this information ("Four Lies About Social Security" Issue 37). That flag they're waving keeps getting in their eyes and ears, blocking their brains from working. They don't read, they're glued to the tube, they're overworked, underpaid and involved in unimportant activities. Those who do have money don't care. It's an uphill battle. I'll pass this information on to all I can.

Thanks.

Lois M. Scheel, Grants Pass, Oregon

IMPACT:

Hartman is right about Wall Street's motivation for pursuing social security privatization ("Four Lies About Social Security," Issue 37). He is wrong, however about social security itself. The biggest error is assuming that the 'Trust Fund' exists in the first place. The 'Trust Fund' contains non-marketable government debt. The debt is sold to the 'Trust Fund' by the Treasury. The Treasury then uses those moneys to pay for current government spending. This is like putting the money you've saved in your left pocket, and promising only to spend funds from the _right_ pocket.

When you go to the store and discover no money in your right pocket, you have your right pocket take some money from the left pocket, promising to pay interest on what it took. Then you spend the money from your right pocket, all the while proclaiming, "But I didn't spend it from my left pocket, so I must be saving!"

I agree that it is doubtful that Treasury will ever default on those non-marketable obligations. But this 'concern' is a straw man diverting attention from the fact that social security has always been (and always will be) a pay-as-you-go system. We can quibble about dates at which social security will become

bankrupt, but the inescapable conclusion is that demographic shifts associated with the baby-boom elderly make it mathematically impossible for social security to be maintained long enough for my demographic cohort to ever draw their benefits.

Best Regards,

JBF

IMPACT:

The simple truth is that the vast majority of people forced to pay into social security would have better returns if they just took the money they're forced to contribute to the ponzi scheme known as social security and put it in a bank savings account.

If people could do the same with the amount of social security paid by their employers, and/or if they invested the money in an index fund, they would be even better off. The difference in returns between meager social security payments and the substantial nest egg they could accumulate via a savings account or conservative investment is astronomical.

The social security program is a joke and would be illegal if any private company tried it. I agree that we should forget privatizing social security - the program should be ended outright. The sale of federal government assets (such as some of the vast amounts of land it holds) could be used to pay for benefits to retirees and refunds to those who are young enough to have time to invest the money.

Kris Biniek

IMPACT:

I just have a quick comment on the social security editorial. Normally, I wouldn't side with the pro-social security side, but I do have to say that your article makes some outstanding points. However, and this is the hang up for me, I can't agree with you about the principal of the matter. Simply

put, the government is taking our money and resuming that they can handle it more responsibly than we can, the ones who made the money in the first place. But I am not saying that as a whole, everyone can make more money off of having personal control over it. A lot of people will not be responsible with it. But that is their choice. The American people have to learn that they are responsible for their actions. And I am not saying this because I think people making poor financial decisions should be punished. It just isn't the government's place to police and protect these kinds of things. If you read anything that Mr. founding father himself Thomas Jefferson wrote, you will see that it was never his intention at all for government to act this way. He was integral in the writing of the constitution that we all hold dear as our source of government. What the constitution says, we do. So why then do we take his advice on government on one hand, yet refuse it on the other? Great article, and if Jefferson had said that we should have a social security system, then you would have sold me on sticking with it. Unfortunately, government has presumed too much upon itself and is not operating in the way it was designed to operate.

Thanks,

Chris Maggio

IMPACT:

This Bill (Re: "Over-Priced Musings - Rip, Mix, Burn, Go To Jail!" Issue 37) is another Blatant Example that Americans can no longer trust either the Repukeblicans nor the Dumbocrats to run this country. Its now a government of Big Business, By Big Business and For Big Business. Not only that, those vested interests of our Government are what is responsible for drawing fire from the Arabs and their Zealot conspirators responsible for September 11.

Regards,

Warren Theriot, 6th generation American

Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

morris sullivan
morris sullivan



Canadians suck.

Okay, I know that's not really true—Canadian figure skaters suck.

I guess that's probably not true, either. But while watching the Winter Olympics, I got really pissed off. I even conceived my own "axis of evil," which mainly included Canada and NBC sports.

In case you live under a rock and managed to completely miss the news, Canadian figure skaters Jamie Sale and David Pelletier won a silver medal in the couple's figure skating competition during the winter Olympics. Apparently, that wasn't good enough for the duo. NBC didn't like it either, so the couple bitched about it and the newscasters bitched about it until the Olympic committee literally turned their silver medals into gold—an act that could only be accomplished through the alchemy of the contemporary news media.

I admit I know next to nothing about figure skating. I gather, however, that there's an artistic element involved, which renders judging inherently subjective. From what the NBC dorks kept saying, Jamie and David should have gotten a gold medal because they fell down less often than other skaters. That's kind of stupid, really. It is possible to perfectly execute a completely soul-less creative work; the fact that actors in a shitty movie manage to remember their lines and not fall over the scenery doesn't make the movie any less shitty.

Frankly, I found the Canadians' routine boring. While they may have technically skated better than the Russians who won the gold medal, I found them less interesting to watch. In fact, I thought their routine was less interesting than many of those that won no medals at all.

"Morris," you might be thinking, "Perhaps your opinion is less worthy than that of the NBC guys. Maybe those announcers know more than you."

Maybe, but I doubt it. Among these idiots was, for example, an announcer who opined that maybe the reason South Americans didn't win many winter Olympic medals is that there's not much ice and snow down there. That announcer never heard of the Andes, I guess, despite the fact that a rugby team once crashed in those mountains; the survivors endured several months of brutal winter weather by digging their less fortunate teammates out of the snow and eating them.

So, you wonder, why am I so pissed off about this? Aren't there

more serious things to get steamed about? Yes, there are: there's global warming; a war in Afghanistan that might extend to Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, among other places; an American President that the American people probably didn't elect and an American people who have forgotten that; legislators that blithely ignore the Constitutional injunction against the separation of church and state and others that seem to think it's okay to suspend its protection of expression once you cross their state or county lines—I could go on and on.

Yet, I'm still pissed at Canada and NBC. There are three reasons: first and foremost, the "figure skating scandal" is a prime example of the mainstream electronic media creating a "big" story out of thin air. Second, it's a good example of the "I say it's true, therefore it is" attitude of the news media. And last but not least, the endless prattle about the skaters severely hampered my ability to enjoy this year's winter games.

I rarely watch sports on television. I know perfectly sane, intelligent people who won't miss Monday Night Football and would willingly lose a leg rather than miss the Super Bowl, but I get bored just thinking about ridiculously overpaid super-athletes standing around during the endless time-outs of the average NFL game. And even *that* is exciting compared to baseball.

However, I like the Olympics. I could get philosophical about the games representing the peak of human physical achievement; about how the athletes are technically amateurs and therefore a more realistic gauge of human potential; about how the games give the world a chance to set its differences aside and enjoy a healthy, non-fatal competition and all that. Mostly, though, I just think they're fun to watch.

This year, I was particularly interested in one sport; I'd interviewed a bobsledder who lives and trains near me, which is kind of weird, since I live in Florida. He was a nice guy, his wife was a nice lady, and had his team won, he would have been the first black male to ever win a gold medal in the winter games. (He won a silver medal.) I wanted to root for him.

Unfortunately, every time I turned on the television to watch the Olympics, I had to sit through an interview with David and Jamie, another blow-by-blow analysis of the situation, another video excerpt from their routine, and finally another triumphant replay of their gold-medal-receiving. Just in case an NBC Sports sponsor is reading, let me state for the record that, once the bobsledding

was over, I finally eschewed NBC's broadcast in favor of the curling competition on another channel.

You know it's got to be pretty damn boring if it makes curling look exciting.

Of course, it wasn't always boring—sometimes it was infuriating. NBC's announcers repeatedly remarked that David and Jamie were "gracious" about "the scandal."

Bullshit. During their interviews, Jamie came across as a snide little bitch with all the grace of a trailer-park housewife; David might be a decent guy, but sitting next to her he just seemed like a pussy-whipped geek.

I watched their first interview after they were awarded the gold. The pinched-faced Jamie snorted derisively at the mention of the Russians; when she tried to say something nice, it carried all the genuine sincerity of Formica. Yet the analysts said she was "gracious." That puzzled me. Were these guys morons?

Then it hit me: the sportscasters, for some unexplained reason, *wanted* them to be gracious; therefore they *must have been* gracious. The whole affair was a slap in the face at the sort of international good sportsmanship the Olympics is supposed to represent, yet the news anchors gushed like schoolgirls about what good sports Jamie and David were.

I'm reminded of a conversation I just had with a lawyer I know. I quoted him in a story, describing him as a "prominent civil rights attorney." He liked that, and laughed about it a little, as if he wasn't sure he was "prominent." Of course he's prominent, I thought. When I say, in print, that he's prominent, *I make it true*.

As a journalist, I was most annoyed by the fact that this story never would have existed were it not for the "journalists" involved. There were other controversies at the Olympics this year, and thousands elsewhere. Yet this story, above all others, managed to capture the attention of most Americans and consume a staggering amount of airtime.

There's an axiom I've heard used both in quantum physics and management theory: a behavior, when observed, will change. NBC looked at the skating competition, they showed it to the rest of us, and in so doing, changed it. That's one of the pitfalls of news coverage and also one of its strengths. Had NBC's announcers treated David's and Jamie's silver medal as just another medal

story, it's unlikely the unprecedented awarding of a second set of gold medals would have occurred.

I wondered what would happen had the situation been reversed. Would this still have been an important story? Would NBC have given two hoots in hell if the judges treated "unfairly" some Bulgarian couple? The answer, clearly, is "Nope!" In fact, no one worried about the effect on all the other contestants in that event of the allegedly shady judging.

That also puzzled me. I suppose Jamie and David became an international incident because they're Canadian. Canada, as you know, supports the U.S. in that other war, the one with all the terrorists and stuff (which means when the draft is reinstated, you draft-age kids will have to escape to some other country). On the other hand, we've re-kindled the cold war with Russia, so they're the bad guys.

It reminded me of my childhood, back in the "duck and cover" days. Wrestlers (the TV variety, not the Olympic types) used to play "good guy" and "bad guy" roles. Really bad-guy wrestlers would have Russian-sounding names, just to make sure you knew they were evil devils. When the Mad Trotsky would whip Mountain Boy Jethro's ass by bashing a chair over his head, it was cheating. When Jethro would bash Trotsky over the head with a chair, it was justice.

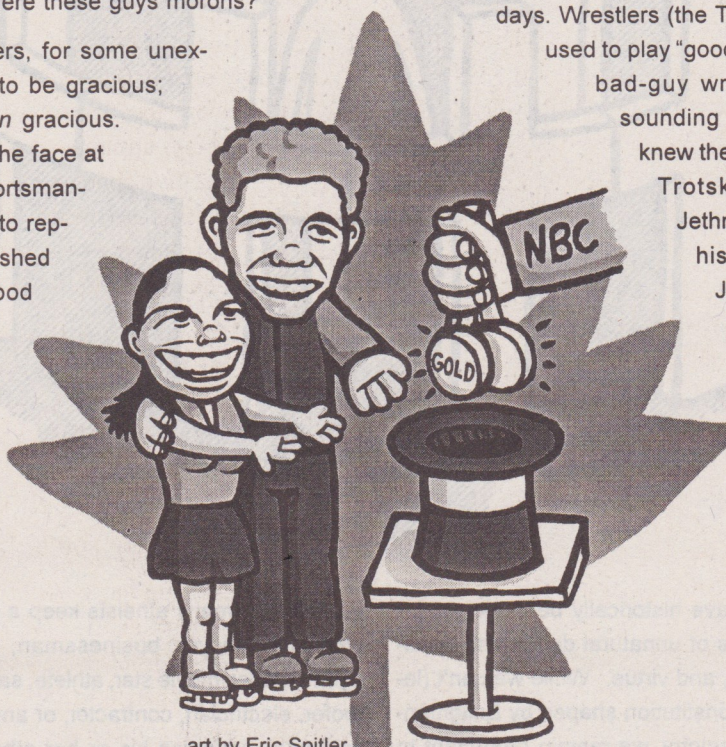
Those wrestlers metaphorically represented the national mood. In simple Black versus White terms, they fought the battle between Americanism and Communism—between good and evil.

Similarly, Elena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze represent a country we distrust. They speak English with funny accents (even funnier

than Canadian accents, that is), and you can't pronounce their last names. They are, therefore, inherently worthy of suspicion.

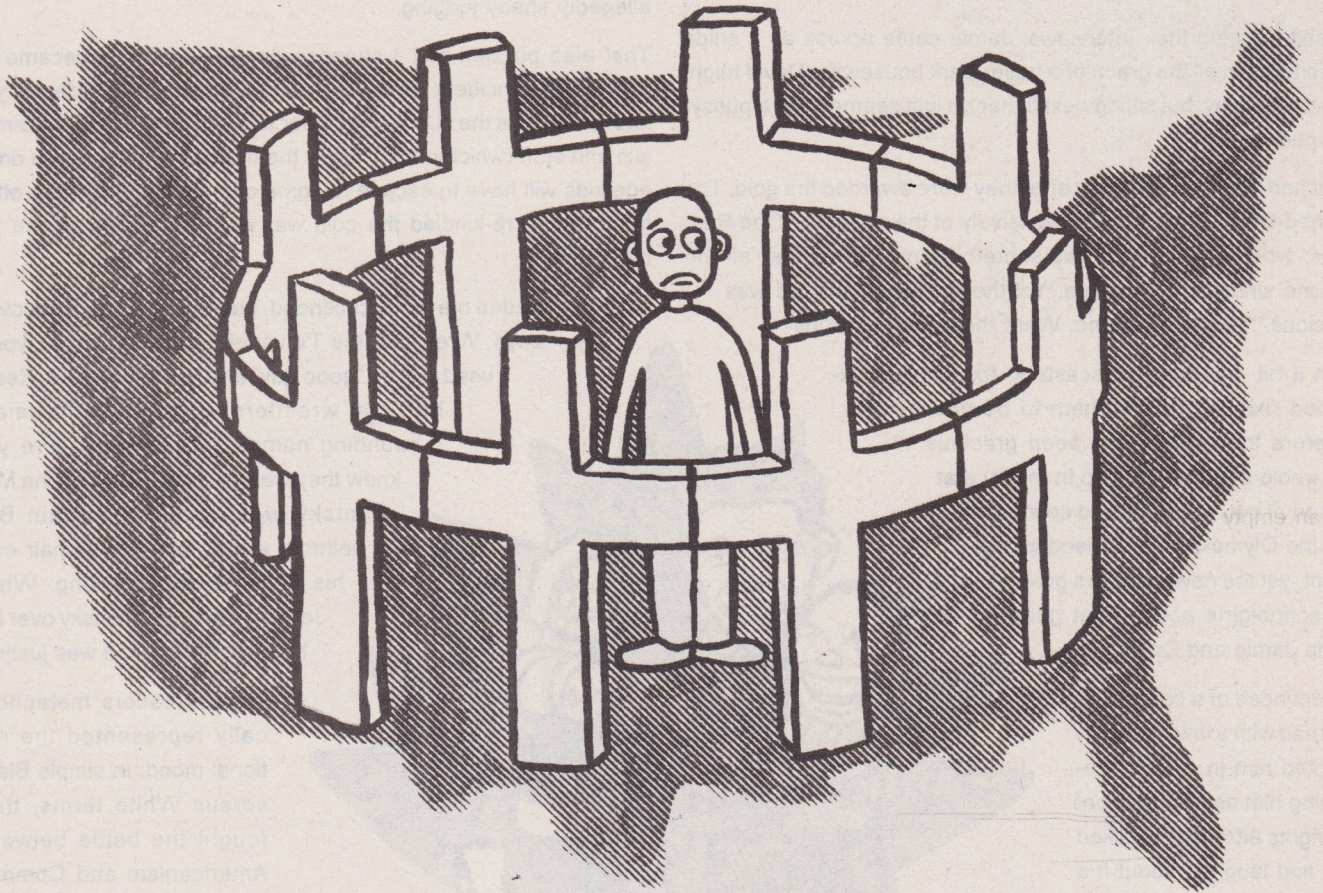
Jamie and David, on the other hand, represent the "good" side of the world. They're from our continent, speak our language, and live in a country that supports our war. And that, I'll wager, is why NBC Sports made such a big deal out of this. We were all supposed to identify with the Canadian couple and root for them in the battle of good against evil.

I hope NBC and Canada will forgive me if I'd rather have my own personal war against evil fought by Mountain Boy Jethro. ◀



Aliens in the Holy Land: American Atheists

by Gary Sloan • art by Eric Spitler



IN THE NEW EDEN, atheists have historically been viewed as agents of Satan—vile practitioners of unnatural deeds and insidious saboteurs of innocence, truth, and virtue. While we can't (legally) be strung up, thanks to a Constitution shaped by Enlightenment minds averse to religious zealotry, we remain repugnant to mainstream America. An Old Testament mentality underpins the animosity. American freedom, prosperity, opportunity, and power—the American Way—is sustained (it is thought) by divine favor. Should atheism flourish, an offended deity will withdraw from the Chosen People his beneficent guidance. Losing its privileged status among nations, a godforsaken America will, like the Roman Empire or Sodom and Gomorrah, careen to irreparable ruin. Though irrational, the fear is embedded in the American psyche.

Hence, according to a poll conducted shortly before the last presidential election, 49% of the American electorate wouldn't, under any circumstances, vote for an atheistic candidate for president. Since people like to appear tolerant, even to anonymous pollsters, the figure probably understates the national antipathy. Because of

the hostility, many atheists keep a low profile. How often does a physician, lawyer, businessman, journalist, teacher, insurance agent, broker, movie star, athlete, salesman, police officer, plumber, roofer, electrician, contractor, or anyone else dependent on public patronage advertise his or her atheism?

Since 9/11, American atheists have felt more keenly than ever (if possible) that we are strangers in a strange land. Public discourse on the tragedy is steeped in the vocabulary of piety. The words "God," "faith," and "prayer," ubiquitously invoked, unify the 90% or more of Americans who believe in divine Providence. Like tribal talismans, the magic words ward off evil. But in atheists, for whom prayer and faith lack efficacy in a godless universe, the words intensify our sense of being outsiders.

The parlance of piety baffles us. Take the words "God bless America."

The American scene is dotted with billboards, signs, stickers, and banners blazoning the words. A grammarian might tell us the

words are in the subjunctive mood, not the indicative or the imperative. They neither inform (God blesses America) nor command (God, bless America). Instead, they express a wish (May God bless America) or a prayer (Dear God, please bless America).

But what does the prayer (or wish) mean?

Assuming, for the moment, an almighty deity interested in human welfare really exists, in what sense is he to bless us? With good health, bouncing babies, self-sacrificing spouses? Philosophical wisdom? High IQ's? Fat paychecks, sirloin steaks, sport utility vehicles, faster computers, more cable channels, bigger boom boxes? Competitive Superbowls? Better facelifts? Speedier cruise missiles, smarter smart bombs, stealthier stealth bombers? Continued monopoly on the planet's natural resources?

Does "America" even mean Americans? If so, does it mean *all* Americans, including murderers, rapists, thieves, swindlers, embezzlers, muggers, liars, cheats, bullies, pederasts, pornographers, conceited airheads, lazy slob, domestic tyrants, bigots, racists? Or does "America" refer to land, spacious skies, and amber waves of grain? Or to some platonic ideal of government embodied in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, worthy of blessing even if some Americans aren't?

Could it be that "God bless America" doesn't mean anything? That it is an empty mantra which appeals to feelings of solidarity and virtue?

As priest-in-chief of the Holy American Empire, President Bush habitually uses the language of piety. In February, at the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, he urged Americans to turn to prayer in "this time of testing." The terrorist attacks had put him, he said, "on bended knee."

Why? Was he petitioning a despot swayed by servility and flattery? Is this the despot before whom the 9/11 skyjackers bowed and prostrated themselves five times a day? Does the potentate favor the most obsequious grovelers? Is he motivated by vanity rather than goodness or justice?

Addressing the lawmakers, foreign heads of state, and prominent clergymen in attendance at the breakfast, Mr. Bush extolled faith. Faith strengthens, faith abides, faith overcomes every obstacle. Unfortunately for the befuddled atheist, he didn't explain how. Does faith work in tandem with groveling?

Faith seems to jostle with his fiscal policy. "Faith," Bush told the dignitaries, "shows us the way to self-giving, to love our neighbors as we would want to be loved." Faith instructs us "never to target the innocent." Presumably, Mr. Bush, a born-again Christian, tries to follow the teachings of his favorite philosopher, Jesus Christ. Threatening the rich with eternal damnation, Jesus championed the poor, the destitute, the marginalized. Yet Bush has done the following:

- Reduced by 86% the Community Access Program for public hospitals, clinics, and providers of care for people without insurance.
- Reduced by 40% the Low Income Home Assistance Program for Americans who need assistance paying energy bills.
- Cut \$60 million from a Boy's and Girl's Clubs of America pro-

gram for public housing.

- Cut \$700 million in capital funds for repairs in public housing.
- Cut \$200 million of work-force training for dislocated workers.
- Cut \$15.7 million earmarked for states to investigate cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Eliminated a program to provide child care to low-income families as they move from welfare to work.
- Signed a bill that makes it harder for poor and middle-class Americans to file for bankruptcy, even when bankrupted by gargantuan medical bills.
- Proposed elimination of the "Reading Is Fundamental" program, which gives free books to poor children.
- Proposed a \$2 trillion tax cut, of which 43% will go to the wealthiest 1% of Americans.

To atheists, destitute of faith, these budgetary actions don't appear to minister to the needy.

Religious faith, as understood by atheists, refers to beliefs unsupported by evidence or the facts. Many of the beliefs seem indistinguishable from wishful thinking. We think faith is a poor substitute for observation, experiment, and critical thinking. We see nothing wrong with hoping for the best as long as one is realistic about the outcome.

Despite the bad press, atheists are, on the whole, innocuous. Most of us are law-abiding. In fact, only one percent of prison inmates are atheists. We prize the family. (Atheists have a lower divorce rate than Baptists.) We share the American ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity. We value civility, honesty, kindness, integrity, and courage. In personality, a cross-section of atheists looks like a cross-section of theists. Some atheists are gregarious and chatty, others quiet and retiring. Some are studious, a few mindless.

When the horrific events of 9/11 are dispassionately considered, atheism looks pretty benign. The culprit was bellicose theism. Whatever our faults, we atheists will never kill ourselves or anyone else in the name of religion. ❧

Gary Sloan, a retired English professor in Ruston, Louisiana, is a regular contributor to freethought media. He can be contacted at sloangg@bellsouth.net

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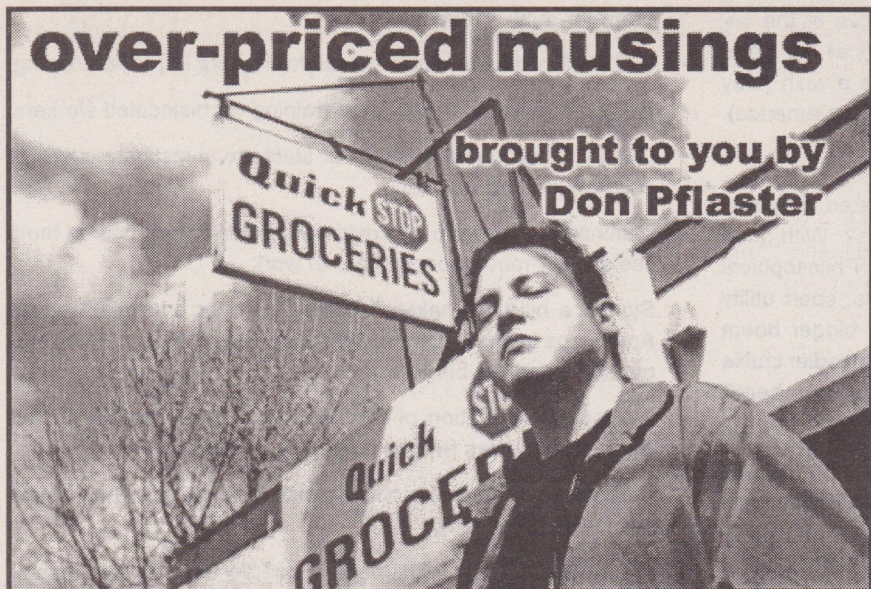
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COMPUTERS UNDER YOUR SKIN For Godssakes!

The day is finally here. Millions of years of human evolution have brought us to this milestone, one that perhaps does not advance human technology all that much, but that has more significance than most inventions that have come before.

There are now identification microchips that are ready to be placed inside the human body. This is no drill, comrades. This is *it*. A Florida company, Applied Digital Solutions, has developed a product called "VeriChip." The company is planning to request approval from the Food and Drug Administration to begin implanting the chip in human beings very soon. Smaller than a dime, its purpose is wholly medical and accepting the device will be completely voluntary.

It will contain data about a patient's medical history and information about any allergies or medications the patient may be taking, and it can only be read by a certain type of scanner that the company hopes to deliver free to hospitals and ambulance units. The benefit would be

instant knowledge for health care professionals about how to treat people.

Good intentions aside, a chip such as this can have but one purpose when all the sugarcoating is removed: *Identification*. This chip contains a number, and when activated by the energy of the scanner, the chip transmits its unique identifier number to the scanner, linking you to a larger database. It allows other people to know exactly who you are without tapping into your brain for the answer, and without the risk of inaccuracy.

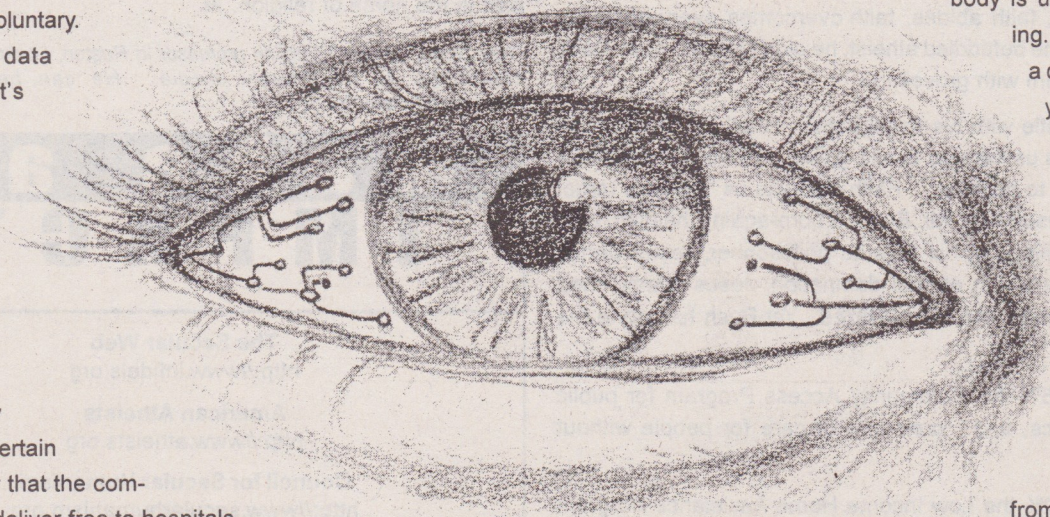
As I was growing up absorbing all sorts of cyberpunk in films and television, I'd always taken comfort that the issue of "tagged" human beings was something off in the somewhat distant future. Like any horrific monstrosity yet to come, it

was healthy to talk about it, to create art about it, to appreciate the arguments against it and to avoid the mistake of actually *doing* it. And I was never much worried about this issue, because I thought there would be such a backlash against it when it finally came that it would never be properly implemented. I thought it to be so much of a no-brainer that society at large would reject it outright.

It remains to be seen what society's reaction will be to this. The optimist in me hopes there will be massive dissent. It looks unlikely, though; because there are people already lining up to accept this new chip, ready to be the first persons to be tagged. They are the people for whom the thought of a lightning-quick diagnosis of their condition is too appealing to resist. For them, the need is too great, and thus, they become the first unwitting foot soldiers of a much greater movement.

It is the opinion of this columnist that accepting some digitally encoded device into your

body is utterly dehumanizing. When you have a device that makes you into a walking receiver/transmitter, you become some sort of eerie human-plus, separate from all the rest. And humans typically don't like being apart from the general consensus of the rest of the



art by marty kelley

The pressure will soon mount for all persons to be implanted, not just from already-implanted friends and not necessarily from government, but from business—the real government.

friends and not necessarily from government, but from business—the real government. Business will make it so incredibly convenient for you to have a biochip that nobody will have to force you to accept one; you won't be able to resist the new world of joyous free time you'll have! You'll be able to check your groceries out in eight seconds, reducing the time it takes to serve and be served at checkout lines. You'll be able to pay tolls to cross bridges and expressways without having one of those cumbersome devices on your windshield or an unsightly barcode on your bumper. You won't even have to slow down! The police will be able to rush to your aid in an instant when you need assistance, reducing crime a thousand fold. As for your children—you'll never have to stay up until two in the morning wondering where they are, nor will anyone ever pull off a successful kidnapping. It's a win-win situation for *everyone*.

And hey, as long as everyone's got a biochip, let's use it for our national identification system. Why not? It's a tried and true method of unique identification *anyway*. It's not easily removed or duplicated, and the records in the national database will not be easily tampered with.

"It's what we call function creep," says Lee Tien, a senior attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a privacy advocacy group. "At first a device is used for applications we all agree are good but then it slowly is used for more than it was intended."

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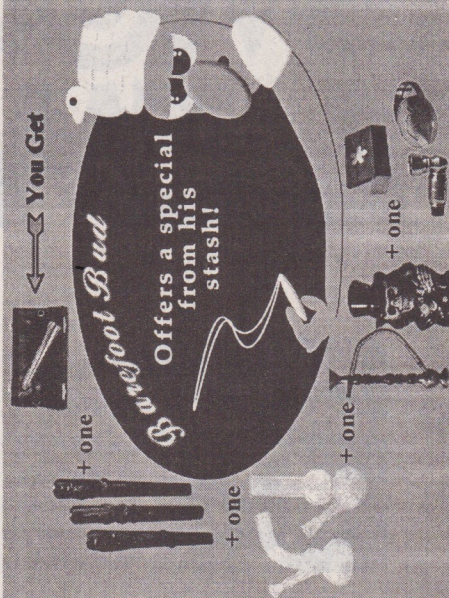
Let us all make sure that when it comes, no matter how much we want it, we don't *really* want it. ☐

population, especially not when there is a quality of life issue involved.

The biochip will not remain a medical device. Not when there is so much potential for efficiency inherent in its very existence. It will have customer service applications and location tracking applications. Once these human-plus folks start catching on, and everyone sees how "neat" it is, it will become like the cellular phones of today. Implanted people will have a distinct advantage. People will look at you in amazement when you tell them that you have no biochip. "You have no biochip? Are you some kind of crazy Luddite?"

The pressure will soon mount for all persons to be implanted, not just from already-implanted

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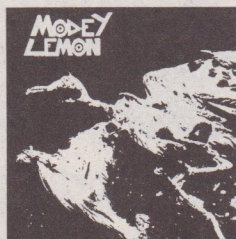
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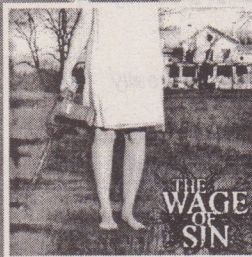


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Pentagon's Silver Lining May Be Bigger Than Cloud

Both columns by Norman Solomon

Norman Solomon is executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy, a nationwide consortium of public-policy. His latest book is "The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media." His syndicated column focuses on media and politics.

THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC INFLUENCE went from obscurity to infamy to oblivion during a spin cycle that lasted just seven days in late February. Coming to terms with a week of negative coverage after news broke that the Pentagon office might purposely deceive foreign media, a somber defense secretary announced: "It is being closed down." But for Donald Rumsfeld and his colleagues along the Potomac, the inky cloud of bad publicity has a big silver lining.

Orders to shut the controversial office came a day after President Bush proclaimed zero tolerance for lies from U.S. officials. "We'll tell the American people the truth," he vowed.

Would the Defense Department try to deceive journalists? The question in the air was distasteful, and the answer from Rumsfeld could only offer comfort: "This is something the Pentagon has not done, is not doing and would not condone."

A retired Air Force general was likewise reassuring when the Office of Strategic Influence crashed and burned. "I'm absolutely convinced that in no way would top officials of the administration ever have approved lying to the media," said Donald Shepperd, who now works as a CNN military analyst.

After Rumsfeld ceremoniously disbanded the office, amid profuse pledges of veracity, Newsday columnist Ellis Henican astutely observed: "But don't worry, Rumsfeld's people were whispering yesterday around the Pentagon. They'll keep on spreading whatever stories they think they have to—to foreigners especially. Call it the free flow of misinformation. Who needs a formal office for that?"

The whole brouhaha must have caused quite a few laughs in high places behind the Pentagon's thick walls.

In American news outlets, some of the attacks on the Office of Strategic Influence actually reinforced the notion that the U.S. government has no rational motive for hiding truth, since its real endeavors can proudly stand the light of day. It's an easy misconception that would hardly displease the propagandists who concocted the Office of Strategic Influence in the first place.

At the end of a tough New York Times piece entitled "Office of Strategic Mendacity," columnist Maureen Dowd applied an oily salve to the PR wounds she'd just inflicted. "Our cause is just," she concluded. "So why not just tell the truth?"

Why *not* just tell the truth? Because, whether the issue is support for human-rights abusers or civilian deaths courtesy of U.S. tax-

payors, "the truth" would often indicate that the Pentagon's cause is not just. That's why not.

As soon as Rumsfeld declared the Office of Strategic Influence to be null and void, some public-relations dividends began to flow. The Chicago Tribune quoted Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, generously praising officials at the Pentagon: "This is good news for the public. Now we can have more confidence that what they're telling us is true."

But anyone would be ill-advised to have "confidence" in the truthfulness of Pentagon pronouncements—or to trust that officials aren't hiding key facts with the simple strategy of

withholding information. As a practical matter, the most effective whoppers—"the greatest triumphs of propaganda," in the words of Aldous Huxley—are told by maintaining "silence about truth."

Four centuries ago, the French cardinal and statesman Richelieu wrote that concealing true intentions "is the art of kings." ("Savoir dissimuler est le savoir des rois.") For kings and presidents, the illusion of credibility is crucial. Manipulative successes hinge on deference from courtiers and scribes, reporters and pundits.

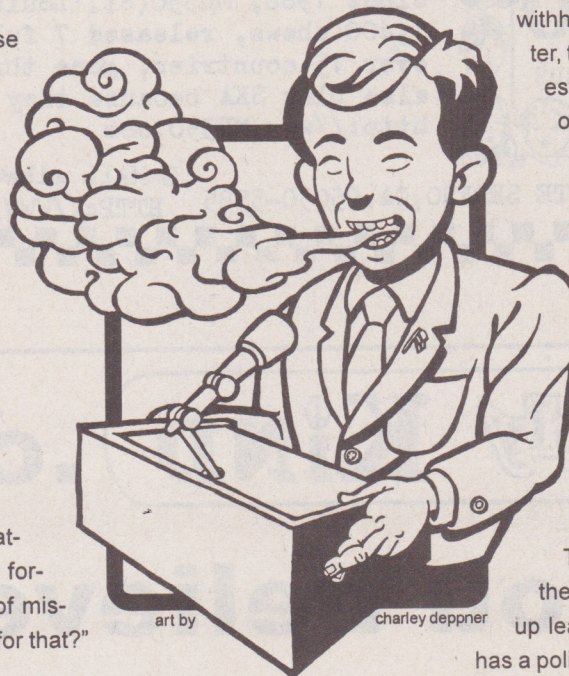
To a significant extent, the uproar over the Office of Strategic Influence could end up leaving the impression that the Pentagon has a policy of being truthful with journalists. If so,

other institutions eager to repair their images might consider setting the stage for similar damage-control moves.

For instance, if a staffer at Philip Morris leaked a memo proposing to deliberately target teenagers with cigarette advertisements, the president of the firm could then call a news conference to explain that he's shocked—shocked!—that anyone would suggest such a thing. With luck, some news accounts would portray nipping the formal proposal in the bud as an indication of resolute integrity. Meanwhile, young people would remain in the cross hairs of countless cigarette ads.

Such tactics can only succeed, of course, to the extent that journalists are gullible—or believe that they must pretend to be—while encouraging the public to go along with the charade.

Hey, whatever works. ■■



art by

charley deppner

Six Months Later, The Basic Tool is Language

CAMERAS HAVE RECORDED COUNTLESS DEFINING MOMENTS. And six months after Sept. 11, some nightmarish televised glimpses of that day's horrors still resonate deeply. Visual images are powerful. Yet there's no substitute for words that sum up what might otherwise seem too ambiguous, upsetting or baffling. Words attach meaning to events.

Since last fall, the biggest media buzz-phrase has been "the war on terrorism." By now, journalists are in the habit of shortening it to "the war on terror"—perhaps the most demagogic term in recent memory.

Present-day reporting is locked into a zone that excludes unauthorized ironies. It simply accepts that the U.S. government can keep making war on "terror" by using high-tech weapons that inevitably terrorize large numbers of people. According to routine news accounts, just about any measures deemed appropriate by top officials in Washington fit snugly under the rubric of an ongoing war that may never end.

Irony, while hardly dead, is mainly confined to solitary reflection. If insights run counter to the prevailing dogma, then access to mainstream media is fleeting or nonexistent. The need for independent thought has never been greater.

At this point, facile phrases about war on "terrorism" or "terror" are written in invisible ink on a blank check for militarism. They can be roughly translated as "pay to the order of the president"—to be cashed with a lot of human blood.

The grand media outlets are so entangled in the current newspeak that they rarely seem capable of presenting any fundamental challenge to the White House. At the same time, a smattering of news outlets—far from the centers of journalistic power—refuse to dodge the task of raising key questions.

A daily paper in Florida made a profound statement on March 2. "The nation's loyalty is turning into groupthink," the Daytona Beach News-Journal editorialized. "How else explain a president who, playing on the war's most visceral slogan, gets away with justify-

ing an obscene corporate tax cut as 'economic security,' a build-up of defense industry stock as 'homeland security,' and an exploitative assault on the nation's most pristine lands as 'energy security'? How else explain his contempt for Congress, his Nixonian fixation on secrecy, his administration's junta-like demeanor in Washington since September?"

The notably forthright editorial pointed out that "without robust dissent, democracy might as well pack up and head for the hills." And it accurately described the status quo of March 2002 in the USA: "This is not unity. It's not patriotism. It's stupor."

At once foggy and focused, the media lexicon of self-justification rolls on. By implicit definition, Washington's actions against "terrorism" can only be righteous—and a penumbra of virtue extends to Uncle Sam's allies. That helps to explain why, in the daily drum-beat of reporting from the Middle East, the Israelis who shoot are engaged in "security" operations while the Palestinians who shoot are "gunmen."

Almost without exception, in U.S. news reports about the back-and-forth violence, exculpatory words like "retaliation" are reserved for deadly Israeli actions, not deadly Palestinian actions. It's a typical element of style for American journalism: Israelis "retaliate." Palestinians don't.

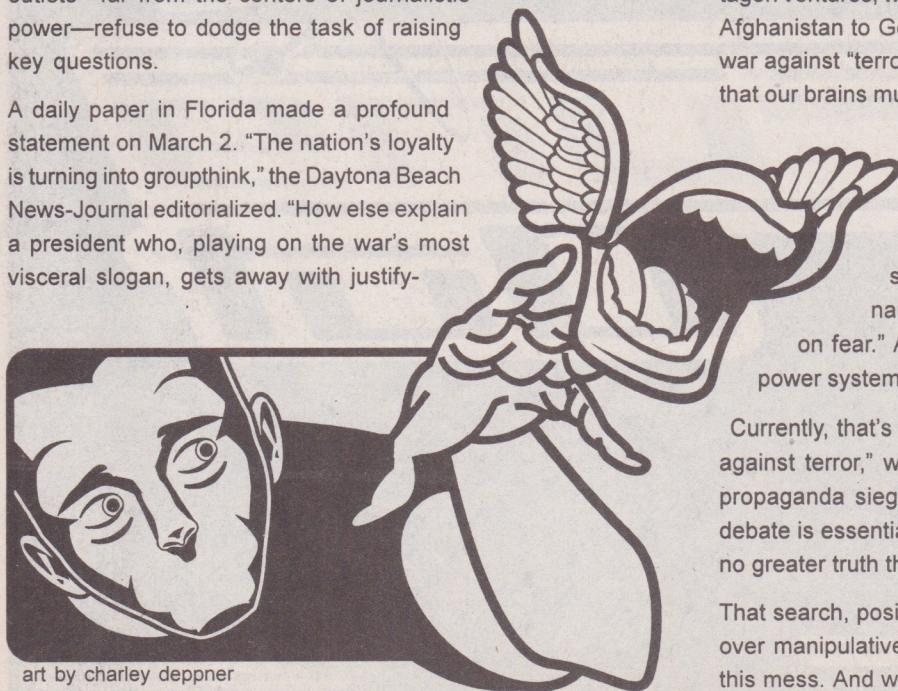
The media spin is exceedingly kind to the occupiers. When Israeli onslaughts take civilian lives, that's not "terrorism." When Israel sends tanks and aircraft to attack Palestinian neighborhoods or refugee camps in the West Bank or Gaza, that's merely an "incur-sion."

Meanwhile, American taxpayers are financing massive new Pentagon ventures, with troops and weaponry deploying overseas from Afghanistan to Georgia to the Philippines. To boast about waging war against "terror" by terrorizing is a no-brainer only in the sense that our brains must be on automatic pilot in order to nod approval.

A little more than a year ago, at the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Latin American writer Eduardo Galeano commented that our societies suffer from "fear of solitude... fear of dying, fear of living." The dominant trends encourage passivity. "Quietism is based on fear." And: "The system presents itself as eternal. The power system tells us that tomorrow is another word for today."

Currently, that's more true than ever. Promised a perpetual "war against terror," we face a parallel media war without end. It's a propaganda siege that must be resisted — because truly open debate is essential to democracy. As Galeano observed: "There is no greater truth than search for truth."

That search, positively endless and necessarily difficult, stumbles over manipulative language. Words are pivotal for keeping us in this mess. And words may be crucial for getting us out. ❧



art by charley deppner



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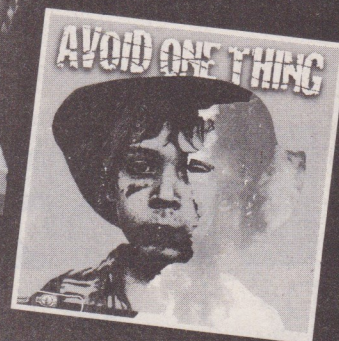
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Amazon Faces Unexpected Pressures

by David Suzuki

From 7,000 feet, the jungle below looks like a vast, green ocean. On this clear day, it stretches in all directions as far as the eye can see. This is the Amazon basin, the largest intact stretch of tropical forest remaining in the world. From up here it looks pristine. But on the ground, things are more complicated.

When you hear about the Amazon, the news usually isn't good. With the slogan "Land without people for people without land," the Brazilian government has sought to use the jungle to absorb thousands of the nation's poor. These forests have been under assault for decades as farmers clear the land for crops and cattle, and logging companies search for prime lumber. It was the plight of the Amazon that galvanized the environmental movement of the early 1990's, culminating in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

The part of the southern Amazon below our airplane has managed to survive relatively intact, thanks largely to the efforts of the Kaiapo, an indigenous group who have fiercely defended their lands against encroachment from logging and mining companies, and ranchers. The Kaiapo want to protect the forests and their traditional practices and knowledge. More than a decade ago, they convinced me to help them start a research station here. Since then, the station has catalogued species of frogs, insects and plants never before recorded by science. We still have much to learn from this land, and its people.

Our plane touches down at the village of Aukre, population 300. On the ground, not much has changed since my first visit in 1988. The children are still healthy and curious and the surrounding forest appears to be thriving. But the Amazon's troubles aren't limited to the forest fringes. Even in this remote place, most of the mahogany trees have been removed. And new studies show that pollution from slash and burn agriculture in one part of the Amazon can harm pristine areas far away.

At the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston in late February, researchers from Brazil's Universidade de Sao Paulo told

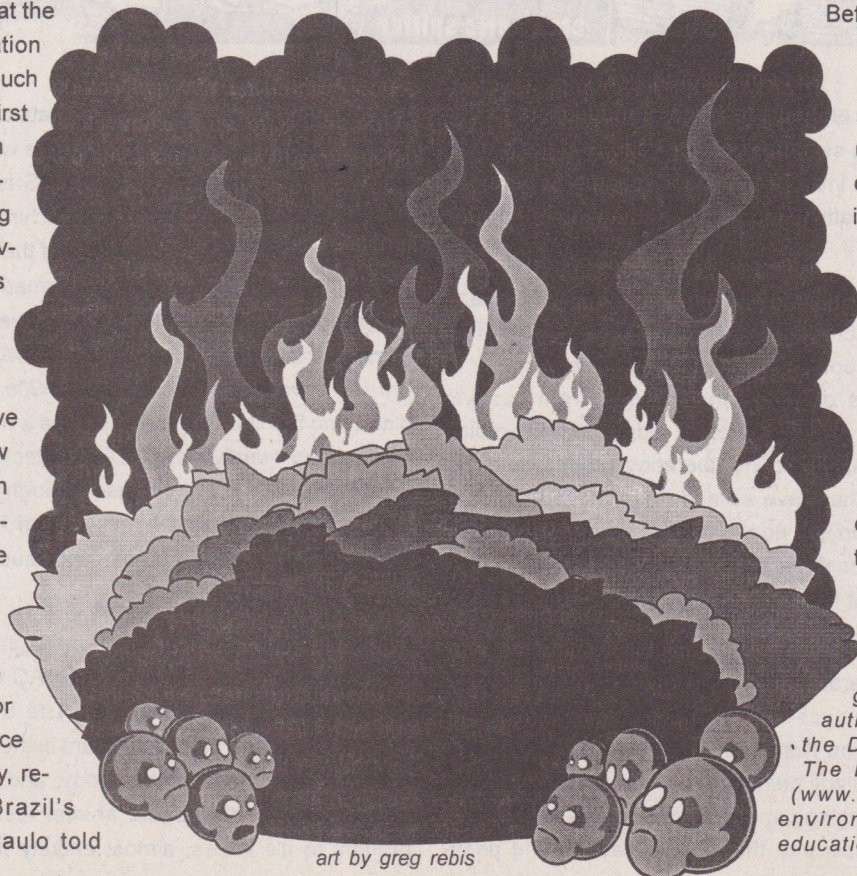
delegates that over half the Amazon rain forest is being damaged by air pollution. The problem is that burning forests are generating so much smoke and soot that they are actually blocking sunlight in some areas, cooling land temperatures by as much as three degrees Celsius.

Smoke contains fine particles that drift in the air. Some particles absorb the sun's rays; others reflect light back into space. Both reduce the amount of solar radiation reaching the earth's surface—in some areas of the Amazon by up to 40 per cent—which significantly reduces plant photosynthesis. In addition, burning trees and brush produces gases which, combined with sunlight, create ground-level ozone—a pollutant that can drift long distances and harm plant life. The Brazilian researchers say that these pollutants could be having a profound impact on large areas of the Amazon rainforest, and because the Amazon is such a powerful engine for global climate, may even be affecting worldwide weather patterns.

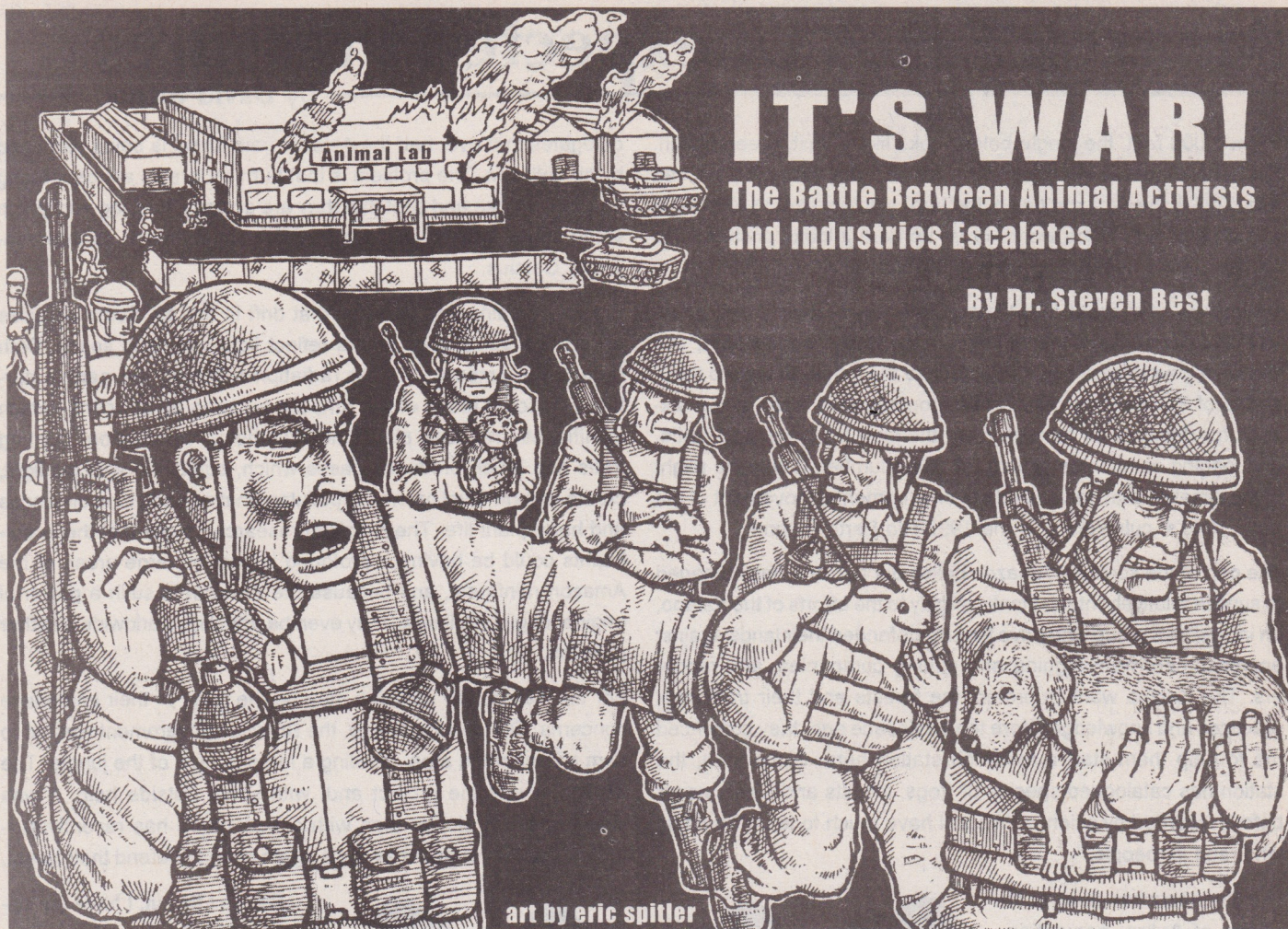
For the Kaiapo, air pollution may be the least of their immediate concerns. Thirteen years ago, the Brazilian government wanted to dam a river in the area, flooding a large portion of the jungle. The Kaiapo fought the project and, with some outside help, it was shelved. But a similar plan with a new name has recently surfaced, and the Kaiapo may once again have to defend their forest.

Before I fly out, I have the opportunity to go fishing on the river. It's rainy season and the water is high, but using fruit as bait, we quickly catch several fish. It is this simple way of life that the Kaiapo want to protect. The land may be vast and their numbers small, but given the incredible life diversity found here and the importance of the Amazon to the global hydrologic and carbon cycles, the best interests of the Kaiapo may also be our own. ❧

Dr. David Suzuki is a geneticist, broadcaster, author, teacher and Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation. The David Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org) is an environmental science and education organization.



art by greg rebis



IT'S WAR!

The Battle Between Animal Activists and Industries Escalates

By Dr. Steven Best

IS IT MY IMAGINATION, OR IS ALL HELL BREAKING LOOSE? Vegan and animal rights activists seem finally to have caught the attention of animal exploitation industries, and the war between them has escalated to intense battles in the streets, courtrooms, boardrooms, and media.

Hardly a day goes by that the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF) have not freed animals from their cages in fur farms and laboratories or destroyed the property of industries killing animals or damaging nature. From burning biotech research labs and destruction of ski lodges to firebombing meat companies, these underground liberation groups have resorted to militant tactics that have earned them the FBI label of "terrorists" as the government now works toward criminalizing animal rights activities through legislation such as the "Patriot Act" that allows the government full powers of surveillance, search and seizure, and suppression of dissent.

The militancy of these liberation groups inspired the most powerful animal rights campaign yet—that waged against Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) by Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). HLS is a large and particularly heinous drug and chemical testing company with offices in England and New Jersey. They profit from pouring industrial chemicals into the eyes of rabbits and pesti-

cides and herbicides down the throats of beagle puppies. A series of five undercover videos exposed the world to just how vicious this company is, documenting how HLS is sadistically beating and killing 500 cats, dogs, rabbits, and chimpanzees a day, 180,000 a year. In one HLS lab report, some of the animals were recorded as "rotting, but still alive." HLS performed necropsy (dissection) on living monkeys and numerous employees were convicted of violating animal welfare laws by the USDA and almost shut down by the UK government. In the late 1990s, outraged activists in England and the U.S. formed SHAC as a militant and ultra-confrontational group. Hardly satisfied with letter writing and petitions, SHAC activists have made their case through property destruction, hassling of executives and employees of HLS and their investors at their workplaces and homes, and raucous demonstrations.

While one can question some of their tactics, one cannot argue with their results: over a dozen major investors have pulled out of HLS. With some just cause, the SHAC website boasts: "The campaign to shut down Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) is fast becoming one of the most significant in the animal rights movement's history. The speed, methodology, and determination with which one of the world's largest animal testing laboratories is being brought to it's knees, almost entirely by the efforts of volunteer

grassroots activists, denotes the endless possibilities of what a small community of passionate campaigners can do. The closure of HLS by an animal rights campaign will not only mean saving the 180,000 animals that die annually in HLS laboratories, but will also signify another nail in the coffin of the vivisection industry."

HLS was on the brink of collapse but was saved at the 11th hour on January 29th, 2001, by Stevens Inc. with a \$33 million bailout. That earned Warren Stevens and his company something he was not ready to contend with, the wrath of SHAC activists. SHAC was hit with Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) suits used by the government to target "terrorist" organizations, but they have persistently dogged Stevens, Bank of America, Morgan Dean Stanley Witter, and other unconscionable HLS investors. Major protests followed in areas such as in Little Rock, Austin, and Dallas. By January 2002, Stevens announced they were pulling out all investments from HLS, delivering a serious blow to the company; other companies abandoned HLS at the mere threat of a SHAC attack. Meanwhile, the University of Cambridge (UK) announced they would not open a new animal laboratory for fear of animal rights activists, as some British scientists vowed to fight back against the new anti-vivisection movement.

It seems a new animal rights movement has been born, one that will have to deal not only with the stigma of "domestic terrorism," but also the spies, harassment, and persecution of the federal government in a time of great paranoia over "homeland security." A prime example of the new attacks on vegetarian and animal rights groups as fanatics and even "terrorists" arrives in the form of the newly created Center for Consumer Freedom (CCF), a coalition of 30,000 restaurant and tavern operators adamantly opposed to vegetarianism, animal rights, anti-biotechnology activists, anti-smoking lobbying, organic foods advocates, and any "food cop" who dares to question or regulate consumption of the goods related to their industry. A vivid illustration of economically conditioned blindness, CCF denies the reality of dangers in second-hand smoke and even that there is an obesity epidemic in American society, which lately has received much media attention. No vegetarian or animal rights individuals or groups fall outside the huge net cast over today's "nanny culture" of politically correct whiners. Besides SHAC and PETA, CCF's favorite target is the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), an organization led by Dr. Neil Bernard and comprised of scientists, medical doctors, researchers, and others who advocate veganism and the abolition of animal experimentation.

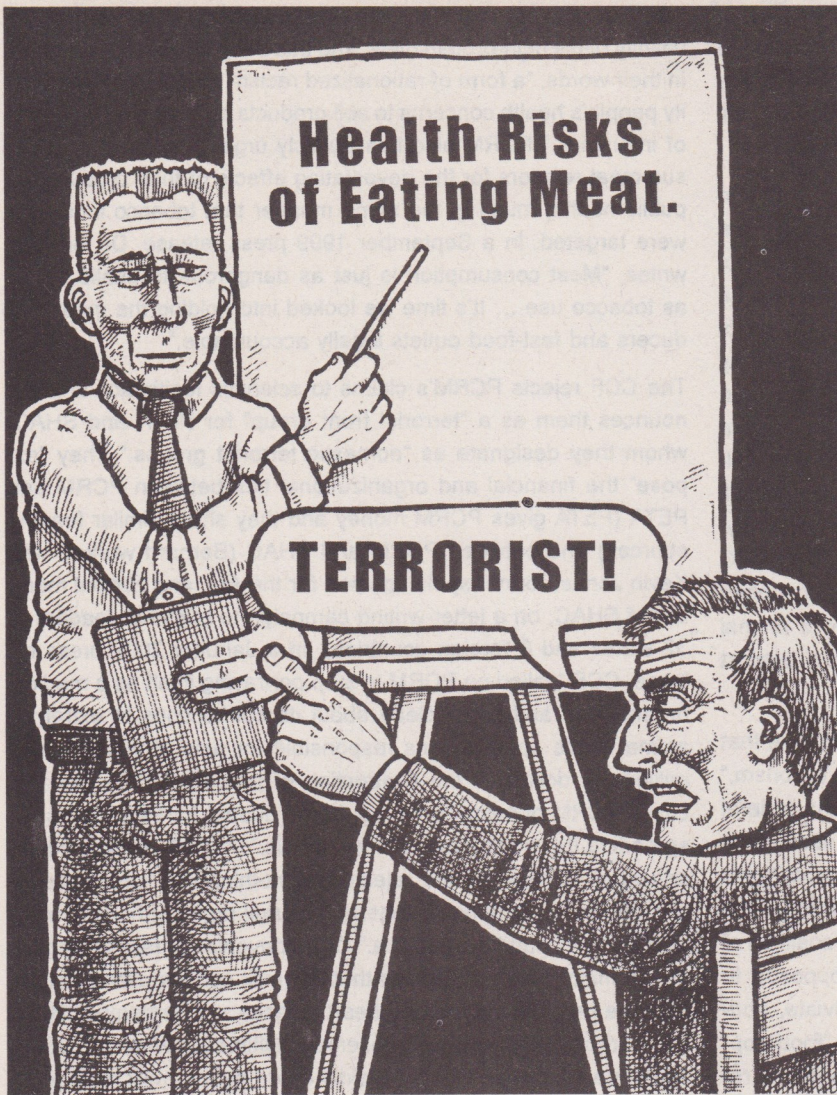
In the last year, PCRM has been

featured regularly in the mass media, debating Dr. Atkins over the validity of his high-protein diets, and attacking the food pyramid as, in their words, "a form of rationalized racism that overlooks minority people's health concerns to sell products by the meat, dairy and of industries." PCRM also has publicly urged the government to sue meat retailers for the devastating effects of their products on public health, much in the same manner that tobacco industries were targeted. In a September 1999 press release, Dr. Bernard writes, "Meat consumption is just as dangerous to public health as tobacco use ... It's time we looked into holding the meat producers and fast-food outlets legally accountable."

The CCF rejects PCRM's claims to scientific legitimacy and denounces them as a "terrorist front group" for PETA and SHAC, whom they designate as "domestic terrorist groups." They "expose" the financial and organizational ties between PCRM and PETA (PETA gives PCRM money and they share similar funding sources) and between PCRM and SHAC (Bernard worked with Kevin Jonas, former spokesperson for the ALF and current member of SHAC, on a letter-writing campaign to business leaders of 32 states and 8 foreign countries). In a January 2002 press release, CCF "called on PCRM to stop portraying itself as a medical organization and come clean about its connections to extremist animal rights organizations responsible for acts of violence and millions of dollars in the destruction of property." They also accused PCRM of being "no more than a puppet for PETA to use in spreading its virulent anti-choice rhetoric." PCRM's superb health education campaigns are rejected as nothing but "junk science" and efforts "to dispense dangerous animal rights orthodoxy masquerading as nutritional advice." CCF conveniently fails to discuss the 16 major research studies that link milk consumption to maladies like prostate cancer and heart disease. In September 2001, PCRM received some much-deserved legitimation when the USDA expert panel agreed that the claims made by the "milk mustache" and "got milk?" advertisements made untruthful health claims.

It seems a new animal rights movement has been born, one that will have to deal not only with the stigma of "domestic terrorism," but also the spies, harassment, and persecution of the federal government in a time of great paranoia over "homeland security."

While crying rivers over the loss of inanimate property, CCF shows no regard for the billions of animal lives lost every year in slaughterhouses and laboratories. They excoriate PCRM for their "junk science" but praise HLS—notorious for its drugged-out and drunk employees who falsify data—as scientifically respectable. They say that PETA and other groups use "scare tactics [that] are designed to intimidate people into accepting a ridiculously small set of food choices" with no acknowledgment to the diversity of vegetarian options including a remarkable soy analogue for any and every meat taste and preference. Is CCF a bunch of insipid morons who make Rush Limbaugh



As evidence of increasing tensions, and especially after the events of September 11, there has been a growing tendency here and abroad to criminalize animal rights activities and brand them not simply as “radical” or “extreme,” but rather as “terrorist.”

seem sagacious? Yes, but they are also the blowback symptoms of the industry's vow to retaliate against vegetarian and animal rights campaigns.

Similarly, the American Meat Association has countered PCRM since at least 1999, when they passed a formal resolution calling on Bernard to stop “the unethical tactics [his] organization uses to manipulate public opinion.” They warned that they will “aggress-

sively counter fallacious claims about biomedical research being made by animal rights groups, especially the Physician Committee for Responsible Medicine and the Medical Research Modernization Committee, two animal rights organizations that purport to speak for medicine.” They claimed they find “the recommendations of PCRM irresponsible and potentially dangerous to the health and welfare of Americans” as they continue “to marvel at how effectively a fringe organization of questionable reputation continues to hoodwink the media with a series of questionable research that fails to enhance public health.” All this, and not a word about the devastating effects of animal fat consumption on humans and the disinformation of the meat and dairy industries.

The war for the public mind unfolds on other fronts. In January 2002, Ringling Bros. Circus and PETA waged mighty courtroom and media battles. The Humane Society of Santa Clara (not PETA) claimed that animal trainer Mark Oliver Gebel bloodied an elephant with a bull hook. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) launched a letter-writing campaign to persuade the district attorney's office to prosecute Gebel, which it did. Ringling Bros. CEO Kenneth Feld argued it was a “crime manufactured to satisfy a political agenda” and apparently the jury agreed as they acquitted Gebel after only two hours of deliberation. Unlike many industries under attack by animal rights activists, Ringling Bros. fought back after the acquittal by taking out full-page ads in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times. Feld signed an “Open Letter to Animal Rights Activists” and singled out PETA for “targeting responsible animal care providers [!] for political reasons.”

Feld, of course, did not discuss Ringling Bros.' notorious record of animal abuse (such as the recent occasion upon which government inspectors found baby elephants with badly injured legs from rope burns and cuts caused by pulling the baby elephants away from their mothers, or when they were cited for forcing sick elephants to perform leading to one of their deaths). Nor of course does he mention that circus animals are inherently exploited and caged or chained most of their miserable lives. While Ringling Bros. may have

won the battle, they and the circus industry have not won the war. Interested in Feld's missive, national media like *The Today Show* carried the story, giving PETA an opportunity to make their case to millions of viewers. On one notable occasion on January 8th edition of *The Today Show*, Ringling Bros. failed to show for the debate, and Wayne Pacelle of HSUS and Jane Garrison of PETA made forceful and uncontested points against the circus, backed

by compelling videotaped evidence. Subsequently, on January 15th, PETA released a shocking undercover video of elephant trainer Tim Frisco of Carson and Barnes Circus spewing profanity, hurting elephants with metal prods, and teaching assistants to inflict pain behind closed curtains and never before the public eye. On February 6th, 2002, CBS news ran the story on their evening news. Apparently the animal industry has not learned the lessons of the Mclibel suit, when in 1990 McDonalds sued British activists for claiming their products were unhealthy, cruel to animals, and harmful to the environment. McDonalds won their case in court, but not without bruising public relations damage as the activists' claims were aired and confirmed by the British court. "From a PR standpoint," Debbie Leahy of PETA said, "it was probably the dumbest thing [Ringling Bros.] could do. We've been flooded with calls from reporters wanting our response, which has given us many new chances to explain why we think circuses inherently abuse animals."

In February 2002, things heated up between Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK), an animal rights group devoted to exposing and documenting the cruelty of rodeos, and the Olympic committee, which had decided to sanctify rodeo as an official Olympic "sport." SHARK strenuously protested this travesty, and as part of their resistance, followed the passing of the Olympic torch around the country with the celebrated "Tiger Truck" equipped with a massive video screen showing images of rodeo cruelty for all to see. When

State Representative Paul Ray (R-Clearfield, Utah) referred to the group on television, in writing, and on the House of Representatives floor as "terrorists" who made "threats of violence" to the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC), SHARK immediately denied the charges and responded with a libel and slander lawsuit, claiming that Ray's remarks damaged their ability to collect donations. As SHARK seeks a trial to sue for unspecified damages, Ray defends the rodeo as "a very important piece of our culture here in Utah" and remains unapologetic about lumping the entire animal rights movement together through the T-word. In the meantime, a chagrined Mitt Rodney of SLOC confessed, "I did not realize how much controversy it would create and how big a hornet's nest I had stepped into." That would be the hornet's nest of the contemporary animal rights movement. Contracted to keep the event, Rodney could not back out, but likely there will not be another Olympic rodeo. Enjoying his own Mclibel effect, Steve Hindi of SHARK has received much media coverage from his "debates" with the rodeo

industry (who somehow never manage to show up). The Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City provided over two weeks of time to air animal rights critiques of the rodeo to an international audience.

These are but a few portals through which one can view the intensifying drama surrounding the struggle between vegetarian and animal rights activists, and the animal exploitation industries. From Ringling Bros. and CCF to British vivisectionists and sportmen's advocacy groups, the industry is fighting back at "notorious and extreme" (according to CCF) organizations they feel want to restrict peoples' freedom to consume, wear, experiment on, and be entertained by animals, while health and animal rights activists continue to pose an ever-greater threat to their economic viability.

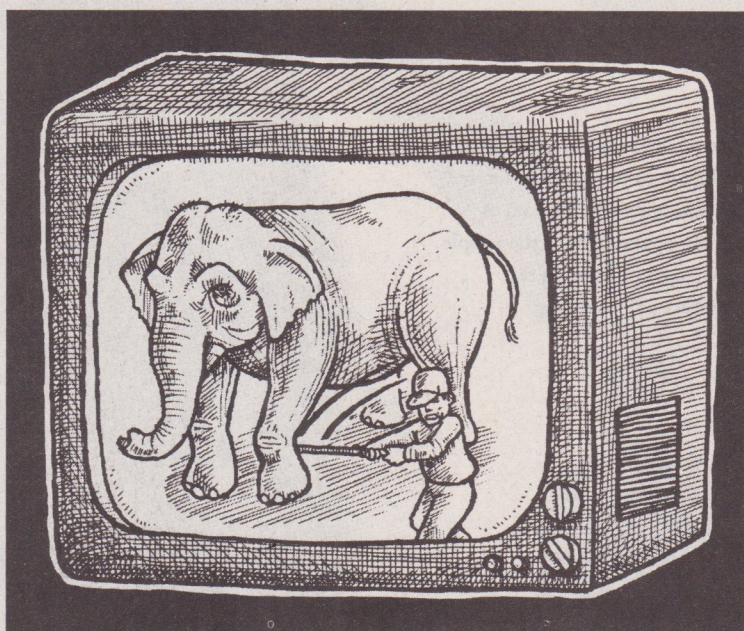
No one has the right to exploit animals, and here consumer "choices" and even "science" must give way to the rights of ani-

mals, unless we are prepared to use the same flimsy rationalizations to experiment on humans too. As evidence of increasing tensions, and especially after the events of September 11, there has been a growing tendency here and abroad to criminalize animal rights activities and brand them not simply as "radical" or "extreme," but rather as "terrorist"—a term that should be reserved to mean inflicting pain and violence on innocent living beings for nefarious political or economic goals.

The ironies are all-too-painful. When puppies are

crippled and punched in the face, when pigs are strapped into restraint devices that smash their skulls, when kittens have their brains carved up, and when monkeys are dismembered while still alive, we are asked to believe this is science, not terrorism. When nearly 10 billion animals each year in the U.S. alone are confined and killed in unspeakably vicious ways by the American food industries, we are told this is business, not terrorism. In this sick and violent society, property is more sacred than life, and thus only those who destroy property are branded as criminals while the real terrorists execute their banality of evil in the daily affairs of the animal industries. ◀

Dr. Steven Best is Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy at the University of Texas, El Paso. He has published numerous books and articles on the topics of social theory, cultural studies, science and technology, and postmodernism. His next book will be *Moral Progress and Animal Rights: The Struggle For Human Evolution*. Some of his writings are posted at <http://utminers.utep.edu/best/>





ONE NATION UNDER GOD?

Blurring the line between church and state

by Elizabeth Moore

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.



art
HOPE

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise hereof." – Thomas Jefferson

These are just a few of the words written by Thomas Jefferson on the need for separation of church and state. Our founding fathers recognized that man is himself "fallible and uninspired," and should not have the power to assume "dominion over the faith of others."

In other words, by keeping a clearly defined line between church and state, religious liberty is protected from interference from the government. If this is one of the ideas our country was founded on, why is religion suddenly so ubiquitous in the public sector?

The Aftermath of September 11th

"You would think we learned from Sept. 11th that the merger of government and religion is a very dangerous thing." - Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State

"...throwing God out successfully with the help of the federal court system, throwing God out of the public square, out of the schools. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way — all of them who have tried to secularize America — I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'" - Jerry Falwell, The 700 Club

Patriotism is often expressed in religious terms, which has civil libertarians and church-state separationists on edge. The wake of September 11th has promoted a lack of understanding of the line between separation of church and state. To conservative Christians, this allows for a new sense of freedom.

Following the rise of patriotism since September 11th, Christian conservatives have been accused of seizing the opportunity to further break down the proverbial wall between church and state. Many people turned to spiritual guidance—which was readily encouraged by the president, as well as other government officials.

In the December 10, 2001 *Chicago Tribune* article, "Crusading for a Christian Nation", Dahleen Glanton reports that church attendance increased 25 percent immediately after the terrorist attacks. (Less than a month later, attendance had returned to normal levels of about 48 percent.)

"In times of difficulty, Americans have always gone back to their faith," said Miriam Moore, legal policy analyst for the Family Research Council, an organization that promotes religion in the public sector. "People's willingness to talk about religion has changed. They no longer come across as tactless or less educated when they talk about their faith."

At the same time conservatives are enjoying their freedom, church-state separationists are feeling trapped, faced with an unprecedented set of challenges.

"It's been difficult to continue to define the line between church and state since September 11th," said Rachel Joseph, legislative representative of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. "Patriotism is so often expressed in religious terms that to raise an objection to religious practice in a public place seems anti-American to many."

For example, according to the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs, an organization that promotes free exercise of religion by discouraging government interference, a public school bus driver in Maryland was removed from her route after refusing to stop her practice of leading the students in morning prayers. She told *The Washington Times* that she began doing it because of President

Bush's call to pray for the nation after the Sept. 11th attacks. She is suing the school district for alleged violation of her constitutional rights.

People are willing to overlook minor breaches in the separation of church and state in the name of patriotism. If the president tells us to pray, why not do it everywhere, not just in church?

"In God We Trust," and "Hang Ten": Promoting Christianity in schools and courtrooms

"This is not a nation established on the principles of Buddha or Hinduism. Our faith is not Islam. What we follow is not the Koran but the Bible. This is a Christian nation."

- Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore

"The God of Islam is not the same God. He's not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It's a different God, and I believe it is a very evil and wicked religion." -Rev. Franklin Graham (son of Billy Graham)

In 1980, the historic case of *Stone vs. Graham* struck down a Kentucky law requiring the posting of the Ten Commandments in public classrooms. The court officially recognized the Commandments as "undeniably a sacred text."

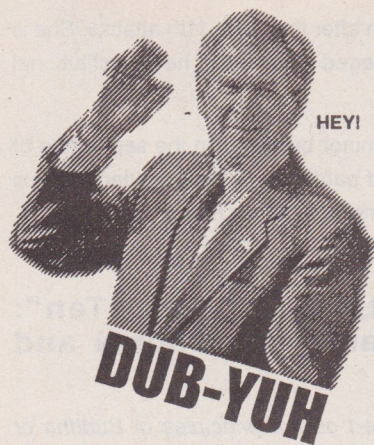
Since this case, advocates of the public display of the Ten Commandments have found ways around the law. By surrounding the Ten Commandments with secular texts, the advocates can claim that the Commandments are there purely for secular educational purposes, acknowledging them as a basis for modern law.

It is obvious why secular advocates would have a problem with this, but conservatives are having a problem with it as well.

"Putting [the Ten Commandments] up next to secular documents is insulting to all parties involved," said K. Hollyn Holman, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs. "It is offensive to religious people, because it insinuates that the Ten Commandments are a secular document, like the Bill of Rights. It disrespects their religious significance in Christianity and Judaism."

Many consider these measures a violation of the First Amendment, ignoring Americans who practice religions other than Christianity. Others are in favor of these measures, holding rallies in support of officials who are attempting to erect Ten Commandments plaques and monuments in city halls, county buildings and courthouses.

Dahleen Glanton reported in the *Chicago Tribune* (December 10, 2001) that Hamilton County commissioners in Chattanooga, TN voted to display the Ten Commandments in the county building and in two courthouses. In Ringgold, GA, a town of 2,000 near the Tennessee border, officials recently placed the commandments,



**President Bush
has long
proclaimed his
faith, often
remarking on his
decision to
become "born
again" at age 40
and how much
his faith has
helped him.**

the Lord's Prayer and an empty frame with the engraving "This is for those of other beliefs" in City Hall.

Last year, the Supreme Court refused to hear a case concerning the display of the Ten Commandments in Elkhart, Indiana. Gov. Frank O'Bannon agreed to erect a 6-foot-tall pillar engraved with the commandments on the statehouse lawn in Indianapolis. Several lower courts ordered the monument be removed.

The Ten Commandments Defense Act (H. R. 3895) was recently introduced by Rep. Robert Alderholt of Alabama. This act is an attempt to give states the option of displaying the Decalogue in schools and other public buildings.

The Alabama Senate recently voted to display the motto "In God We Trust" in all public classrooms. "It reinforces the fact that we have a nation that trusts in God and that our nation was founded by godly people," said Rep. Bill Armistead of Alabama.

Rev. Barry Lynn of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State referred to the bill as "a backdoor scheme to promote religion in public schools. Politicians know they can't require prayer or Bible reading, so they turn to these kinds of maneuvers to get around court rulings against state-sponsored worship."

Judge Roy Moore, Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice, placed a four-foot-tall monument of the Decalogue in the rotunda of the state judicial building in Montgomery. According to Miriam Moore, the Chief Justice is entitled to do so.

"It is the tradition that the Chief Justice always chooses the decor," said Moore. "[Americans] have unparalleled freedom in this country. People should have the ability to govern themselves by the Ten Commandments, which have truly been significant to us historically. There is nothing wrong with paying tribute to them."

School Vouchers

Advocates of school vouchers argue that the reason behind them is to give children of low-income families better education options.

The program was enacted by the Ohio legislature in 1995 to allow low-income families to use a voucher of up to \$2,250 to attend private religious and non-religious schools in and around Cleveland.

In the Supreme Court case *Zelman vs. Simmons-Harris* (expected to be decided by June), the constitutionality of this program is brought into question. Opponents point out that the vouchers are paid for by tax dollars, which could be used to fund religious schools.

"The question is not whether students in Cleveland or elsewhere are entitled to quality education—clearly they are," said Holman. "The question is whether the state can subsidize religious indoctrination in parochial schools."

Advocates of the school voucher program do not see it as a threat to the separation of church and state since the parents make the decision as to whether to send their children to religious schools. "Not only is it incorrect to say that these programs violate church and state, it's also cruel to those children in Cleveland," said Family Research Council's Miriam Moore.

"The Ohio school voucher program is not about funding religion," Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, the legal arm of the Christian Coalition, wrote in a November statement. "The Ohio plan does not advance or endorse religion—it merely provides parents with a sensible method of selecting a school. To exclude religious schools in a voucher program is a discriminatory move that sends a message of hostility toward religion."

This issue has been argued before, and vouchers have repeatedly been struck down and labeled unconstitutional on church-state grounds. The fact is, no federal court has ever upheld a voucher plan.

"It is ironic that the pitch for vouchers has reached the nation's highest court just as Americans have been made forcefully aware by the Sept. 11th terrorist attacks that the religious indoctrination of school children can breed poisonous hatred," writes Carol Richards in her March 10, 2002 *Newsday* editorial, "States Shouldn't Subsidize Religious Schools."

No one has argued that children should have to stay in troubled schools. "Why should we not look at all of the options open to parents?" asked Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who cited community and magnet schools as examples of non-religious options. Others argue that using vouchers will detract from school reform. According to Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, vouchers help only a handful of students, whereas efforts to reform schools would benefit the ninety percent of American children who attend public schools. Advocates for the program point out that the vouchers can be used at any nonpublic school, not just religious ones. Arguments against vouchers point out that 99 percent of students currently using vouchers have opted for religious schools.

Charitable Choice/ Faith-Based Initiative

In a nutshell, Charitable Choice is part of the Community Solutions Act of 2001, a bill introduced in the House of Representatives designed to provide incentives for charitable contributions. Under Charitable Choice, religious organizations are allowed to receive tax incentives for providing social services such as drug counseling, adoption services and AIDS outreach—just like any other non-profit organization.

Before Charitable Choice, any religious organization was allowed to apply for these funds, provided that they establish a separate, secular entity for public funds. This system is known as the Religious Affiliate Model. A religious organization may set up a separate, secular entity to provide social services. This entity can get tax incentives, provided they did not discriminate in their employment and did not evangelize while providing publicly funded services. This way the religious organizations may get nonprofit status for the services they provide without violating the separation of church and state.

Advocates of Charitable Choice argue that religious organizations are being unfairly discriminated against and that they should be able to get tax incentives without setting up a separate entity. Those who oppose Charitable Choice do so not only because it forces taxpayers to fund religious organizations, but also because it allows government intrusion into religion.

"Government funding inevitably saps the vitality of our religious institutions by making them dependent upon government dollars and stifling them with government regulations," said Holman.

Under Charitable Choice, taxpayers would lose the right to decide whether to support religious ministries. As well, these publicly funded organizations would have the right to discriminate against employees based on religion. Under Charitable Choice, religious groups would be exempt from anti-discrimination standards and could refuse to hire employees based on religious beliefs.

Politicians, Lawmakers and Tolerance

According to the February 24, 2002 *Chicago Tribune* article "Officials' religious remarks raise fears of intolerance" by Naftali Bendavid, many Americans are becoming uncomfortable with the continued theological tone of many government officials.

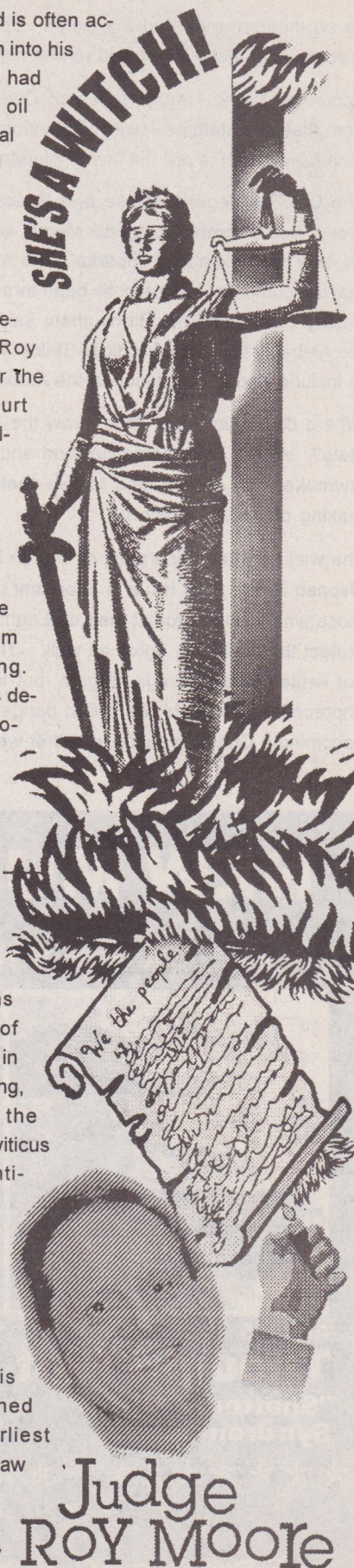
For example, President Bush has long proclaimed his faith, often remarking on his decision to become "born again" at age 40 and how much his faith has helped him. In a speech following the September 11th attacks, Bush said, "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty have always been at war. And we know that God is not neutral between them." Bush and other officials have since referred to terrorists as "evil" and have repeatedly quoted the Bible to reiterate their points.

Attorney General John Ashcroft comes from a strict fundamentalist

religious background and is often accused of bringing his faith into his work. He reportedly has had himself "anointed" with oil upon taking some political offices and has instituted daily prayer meetings at the Justice Department that have made some uncomfortable.

On the state level, the recent antics of Judge Roy Moore, Chief Justice for the Alabama Supreme Court has made national headlines. The Associated Press reports that in a recent custody case, Moore declared a mother unfit because of her homosexual lifestyle and cited passages from the Bible in his ruling. Moore's statement on his decision referred to homosexuality as "an evil disfavored under the law," "an inherent evil," a "detestable and an abominable sin," and "an act so heinous that it defies one's ability to describe it."

According to Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Moore, in his February 15, 2002 ruling, cites passages from the books of Genesis and Leviticus and favorably cites anti-sodomy laws in legal codes stretching back to the sixth century. Moore writes, "No matter how much society appears to change, the law on this subject has remained steadfast from the earliest history of the law, and that law is and must be our law today. The common law designates homosexuality



as an inherent evil, and if a person openly engages in such a practice, that fact alone would render him or her an unfit parent."

According to the Family Research Council, Moore was quoting from Alabama statutes, lower court opinions and the English Common Law, which is still the law in Alabama.

The Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a gay rights group, filed a complaint against Moore, alleging that his comments showed he could not be impartial. The Associated Press reported that the complaint has recently been thrown out, since the Judicial Inquiry Commission in Birmingham said it found no violation of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. There is now a movement to include sexual orientation in the Alabama hate crimes law.

Where do we, as Americans, draw the line between church and state? Where does patriotism end and religion begin? Should lawmakers be encouraged to use their religious beliefs when making objective decisions?

The wall between separation of church and state is slowly being chipped away. This issue is important to all Americans, not just those who wish to protect their civil rights, but those who wish to protect their religious rights as well. The First Amendment was not written to discourage religion, but to protect it. With these unprecedented events, we are in danger now more than ever of becoming a Christian nation, whether we like it or not. ❧

Make an IMPACT

Contact the Alabama Senate at alsenate@mindspring.com and the House at house3@mindspring.com and let them know where you stand on this issue.

Call or write your representatives and express your views on Civil Rights and the Separation of Church and State:
<http://www.vote-smart.org>

Americans United for the Separation of Church and State
<http://www.au.org>

Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
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<http://www.cc.org>

American Center for Law and Justice
<http://www.aclj.org>

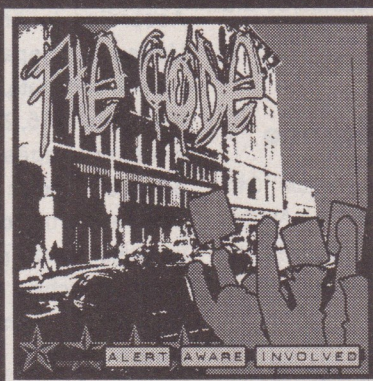
Background Information on Charitable Choice:
http://www.house.gov/scott/c_choice/cc_home.htm

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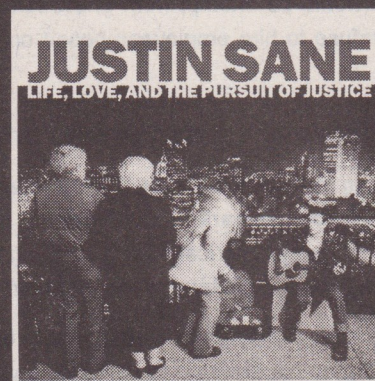
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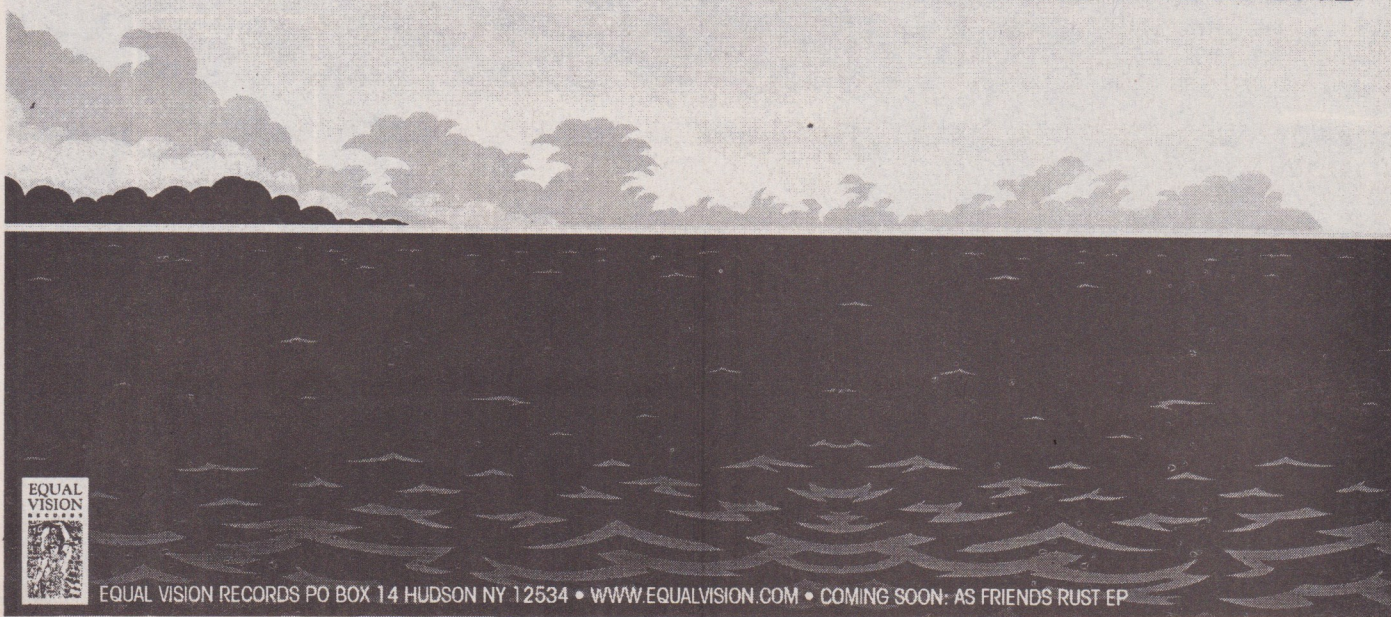
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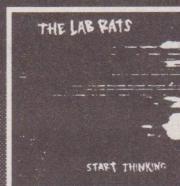
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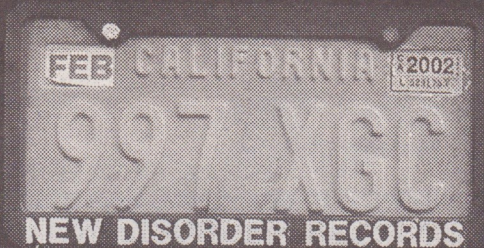
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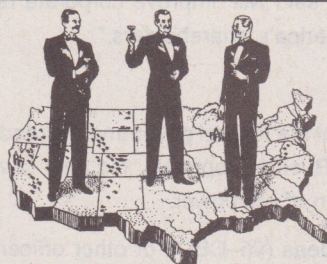
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Businessmen Make Boo-Boos

by Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman

art by Collin Holmes

Let us now take a walking tour of Washington, D.C., to see whether the Enron scandal has loosened corporate America's grip on our nation's capital. (Okay, the answer is no.)

At the White House on Thursday March 7th, President Bush announced a 10-point plan that he said will "improve corporate responsibility and help protect America's shareholders."

It will not.

In fact, a quick analysis shows that the federal government already has the authority to implement Bush's proposals. No new laws are needed. It's merely a question of will power.

Even the toughest of the Bush ideas (#5—CEOs or other officers who clearly abuse their power should lose their right to serve in any corporate leadership positions) can be executed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) today, right now, with no law changes.

But given that the top cop on the securities fraud beat in Washington is the accounting industry's former top lawyer—that would be current SEC chair Harvey Pitt—we may conclude this: there is no will, and there is therefore no way this Bush's 10-point proposal

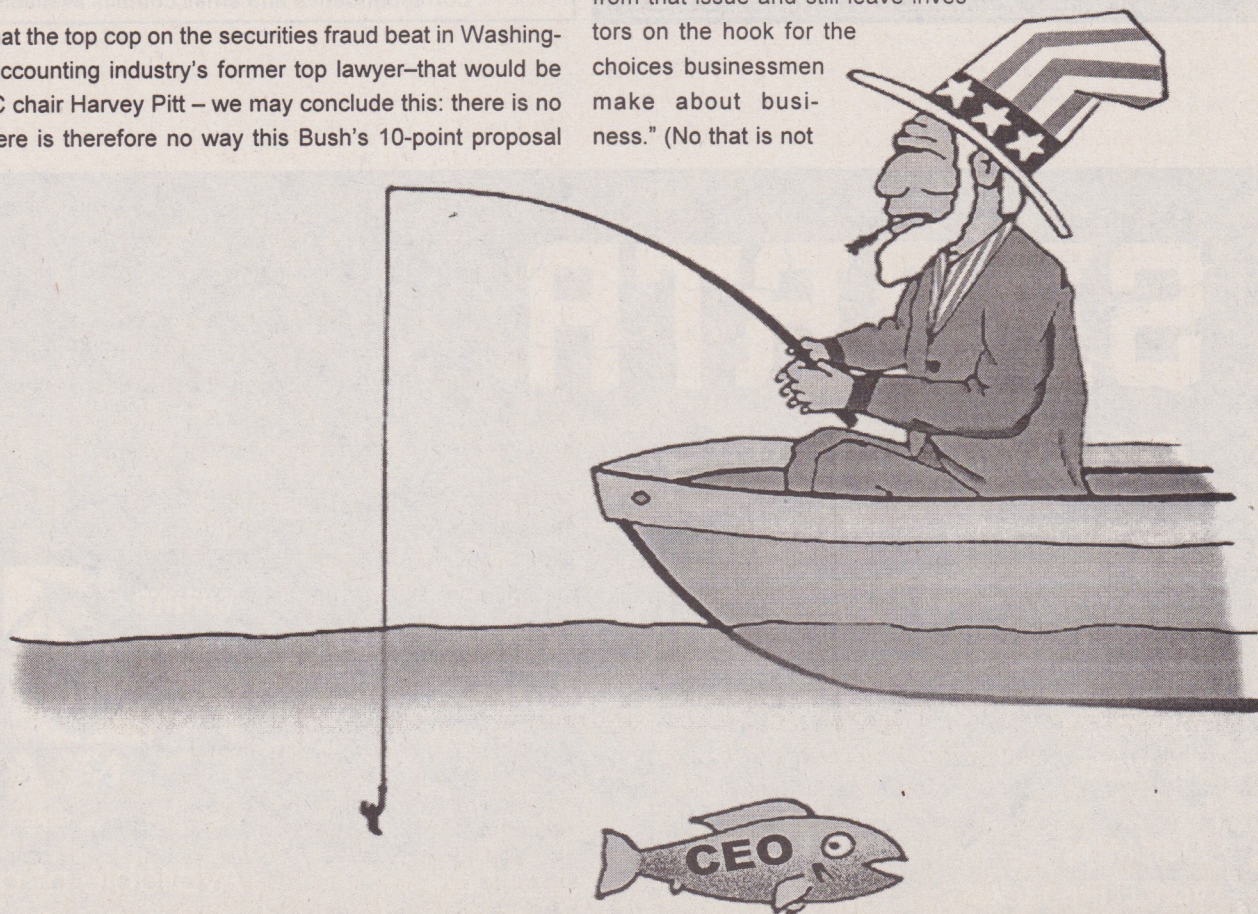
will "improve corporate responsibility."

It's all smoke and mirrors.

Let's remember that when Bush's Treasury Secretary, Paul O'Neill, recently proposed that corporate executives be held liable for their negligent wrongdoing, he was quietly sent packing.

Why?

When asked on the morning of March 7, 2001 about why O'Neill's proposal was shot down, a senior administration official told reporters at the White House: "Businessmen can make boo-boos. When you invest in a company in which a businessman makes a mistake, a business judgment mistake, no one wants to have to have anyone be guaranteed for those returns." (Translation: can't hold the executive responsible for mistakes under the "business judgment rule.") "And we're trying to be very careful to steer away from that issue and still leave investors on the hook for the choices businessmen make about business." (No that is not





Today, corporations hire their own auditors. If the auditors find something wrong and try to get it fixed, a corporation can lawfully fire the auditor and hire another more to its liking.

a typo. According to the White House transcript, he said "on the hook.")

Let us now proceed across the street, to the Treasury Department annex, where the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has for years been engaged in a kind of protection racket—enforcing the law against large corporations for alleged violations of the Trading with the Enemy Act, allowing the companies to settle those cases for a few thousand dollars, and yet never informing the public about those settlements.

Until early March, that is, when as a result of a lawsuit we filed last year, OFAC began releasing the documents detailing about 100 to 150 such cases from 1998 to 2000.

But still, the Treasury Department says it won't inform the public, in a timely manner about which of our giant corporations are "trading with the enemy."

Let us now proceed cross-town to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, where it is the tenth anniversary of the sentencing guidelines for corporate criminals.

These guidelines were drafted in 1991. They created a carrot-and-stick approach. If a corporation had a strong ethics program, an 800-number for whistleblowers, a compliance officer with teeth, but despite all of that, was still convicted of a crime, a judge would give that "good" convicted corporation a lighter sentence.

If a corporation didn't have a strong ethics program and wantonly violated the law, the judge, under the sentencing guidelines, would give that "bad" corporation a harsher sentence.

The result of the guidelines: there are now 800 corporations with ethics officers. The officers even have their own trade group—the

Ethics Officers Association.

But have the corporate crime sentencing guidelines reduced corporate crime? We doubt it.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission says it wants to know the answer, so it has announced the creation of a 15-member ad hoc panel to study the effect these guidelines have had on corporate crime.

But get this: 12 of the 15 members are corporate white-collar criminal defense attorneys or others from the corporate sector. Why no one from the public interest community? Why no lawyers who sue corporations alleging wrongdoing? Why no legal scholars critical of corporate influence over our democracy? (The grip is tight.)

Let us now proceed to Capitol Hill, where Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) is introducing legislation that would create a Federal Bureau of Audits.

Today, corporations hire their own auditors. If the auditors find something wrong and try to get it fixed, a corporation can lawfully fire the auditor and hire another more to its liking.

Kucinich's bill would require that publicly held companies go to the Federal Bureau of Audits and be assigned a government auditor.

It's one of the few reforms we've seen floated in recent months that has a chance of preventing future Enron debacles.

And yet, at the press conference where Kucinich announced his legislation, there were two reporters. And no co-sponsors.

The Democrats, who, like the Republicans, are marinated in corporate cash and culture, see Kucinich's bill as too hot to handle.

The reason: accounting firms stand to lose tens of millions of dollars in auditing business to the federal government.

Let us now proceed down Pennsylvania Avenue, to the J. Edgar Hoover building, where the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is about to release its yearly "Crime in the United States Report."

If history is a guide, the report will document all kinds of street crimes, but not even mention the wave of corporate crime and violence sweeping over our country; this despite the well documented reality that corporate crime and violence inflicts far more damage on society than all street crime combined.

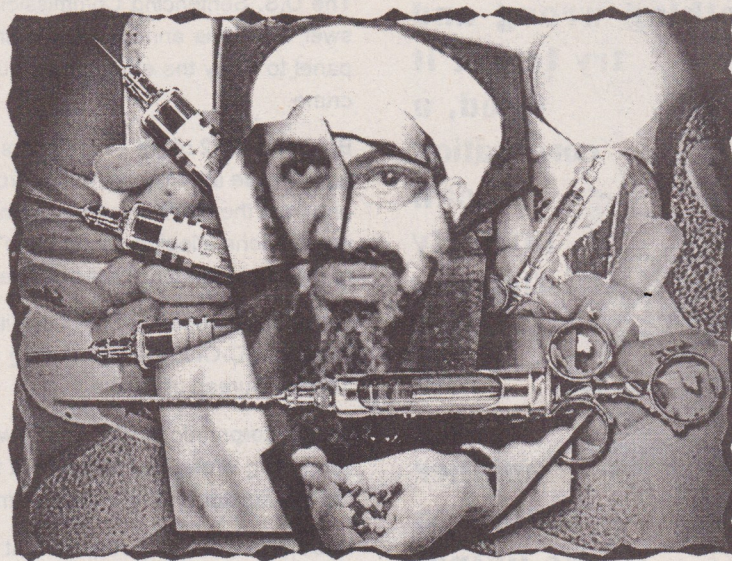
Let us now proceed uptown, to the K street corridor, where we find thousands of corporate lobbyists working diligently late into the night to ensure that whatever citizen energies were released from the Enron earthquake are contained within reasonable bounds.

After all, businessmen make boo-boos. ❧

Russell Mokhiber is editor of the Washington, D.C.-based *Corporate Crime Reporter*. **Robert Weissman** is editor of the Washington, D.C.-based *Multinational Monitor*, <http://www.essential.org/monitor>. They are co-authors of *Corporate Predators: The Hunt for MegaProfits and the Attack on Democracy* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1999; <http://www.corporatepredators.org>). To subscribe to their weekly column just visit the following web site: <http://lists.essential.org/mailman/listinfo/corp-focus>

Unmasking the Drug-Terror Link

The United States is in the midst of two wars. Both enemies are elusive, and end games are hard to discern. What better way to ease the doubts and anxieties implicit in these wars than to merge them. And what better time than the premier showcase of American popular culture, the Super Bowl. With two ads in this year's Super Bowl, the Bush Administration commenced a campaign to convince us that the purchase of illegal drugs was more than an act of personal irresponsibility. As one of the ads put it: "Where do terrorists get their money? If you buy drugs, it might come from you."



by John Buell • art by Greg Rebis

An Administration so intent on making the connection between drugs and terrorism has been remarkably reticent about providing evidence of this connection. Are all illegal drugs implicated? Much of the marijuana smoked in Maine, for example, is also home grown. Unless Maine citizens are Al Qaeda members, it is hard to see how these purchases reach terrorists.

If the Bush Administration were truly interested in the economic foundation of recent Middle Eastern terrorism, Saudi Arabia would be a better target. And surely some of the Saudi millions channeled into terrorism derive from this nation's appetite for imported oil. Perhaps a Super Bowl ad highlighting SUV owners as supporters of terrorism might have made a fitting counter to the usual barrage of auto ads in our football telecasts.

The Bush drug ads are equally forgetful of history. Looked at from a longer perspective, many recreational drugs have become a source of black markets and pools of hidden capital. Yet as AlterNet columnist Geov Parrish points out, two aspects of this story are revealing: "From Afghanistan to Southeast Asia to Latin America, the CIA has for decades been accused (often irrefutably) of reaping huge profits from illicit drugs, money which—as with its illegal arms sales in the '80s that went to anti-Nicaraguan contra operations—has tended to go directly into funding our terror campaigns. If the U.S. does it, it's no surprise that al Qaeda et al would, too. The effort to eradicate certain popular drugs.... has literally created, and perpetuated, the very black market now accused of being a source of cash for al Qaeda's jihad. Ending drug prohibitions would do far more to thwart terrorism than the War on Drugs ever could."

If the Bush Administration's major concern were the health and security of our citizens, cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles and mass transit would be national priorities. In addition, studies by

Rand Corporation have provided strong evidence that rehabilitation and drug education are far better ways to reduce dangerous forms of drug use than police actions and foreign interdictions.

Yet we will likely wait a long time for government ads targeting SUVs and promoting honest public health approaches to drugs. The War on Terror, just like the drug war, is at least as much about affirming the worth and sanctity of mainstream culture as it is about fostering real security. Toward that end, all who differ from the most widely celebrated values are not merely different,

but evil. Recreational drugs associated with the urban poor or the counterculture are decried on the very same telecasts that sell us beer and now even hard liquor. In addition, the war on terror has morphed into a selective attack on every nation that our national security elites see as a threat to US hegemony.

Nonetheless, each of these wars has its problems. Despite two decades of drug war, success remains elusive. Some of the population has tired of the war, either because they regard it as unwinnable or because they have gained a more nuanced appreciation of the range of harms occasioned by various drugs. Years of exaggerations and scare stories have taken their toll.

For its part, the war on terror can point to shattered caves in Afghanistan, but Osama apparently remains at large. And even were we to have irrefutable proof of his demise, just how many of Al Qaeda's hydra-like cells would remain?

Both drug and terror warriors need a powerful enemy to grease their psyche, but an enemy against which tangible progress can be made. Merging of the two concerns is a natural for both. How convenient it is to provide drug warriors and skeptics a new incentive to renew the drug wars. And the war on terror becomes both more tangible if apprehension of the drug user down the street can now be seen as crippling Osama.

Unfortunately, the merging of these wars is not without risks to the rest of us. Each war has already been an occasion for myriad threats to our civil liberties. Fusing the two poses even greater risk. In addition, these vast campaigns drain resources from more evident and pressing threats to our health and security. ❧

John Buell (jbuell@acadia.net) is a columnist for the Bangor Daily News and co-author, with Etta Kralovec, of The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children and Limits Learning (Beacon Press).

BACK TO BEDROCK

George W. Bush vs. Fred Flintstone

By Nick Gillespie

Whose mind didn't get to wandering during George W. Bush's second State of the Union address—the “great speech” (as many commentators dubbed it minutes after its finish) that has already become a vague, did-it-really-happen TV event; the political equivalent of the sans-Bobby Ewing season of Dallas?

But who could have anticipated that the president's remarks would have reminded us of that great, prehistoric proto-American, Fred Flintstone? Between denouncing his low-rent Axis of Evil and stumping for one of the largest federal spending increases in recent memory, the president made an assertion about the American character that called to mind Bedrock's best-known resident—and left one wondering whether Bush really has his finger on the pulse of the common folk, as his supporters routinely claim.

“For too long, our culture has said, ‘If it feels good, do it.’ Now America is embracing a new ethic and a new creed: ‘Let's roll,’” said Bush, invoking the phrase uttered by Todd Beamer as he and other passengers bravely attacked the hijackers of United Flight 93. “We have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self.” Most important, said the millionaire president who waited out the Vietnam War in the Texas Air National Guard, “We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate, and more about the good we can do.”

Forget for the moment that virtually all indicators of social decline (at which conservative Republicans traditionally wag an accusatory finger) have been improving for close to a decade now—a simple reality that completely undercuts Bush's cultural decline argument. Focus instead on the implications of the president's call to voluntary simplicity.

In suggesting a contradiction between buying stuff and being good—between a “culture of accumulation,” as it were, and a “culture of responsibility”—Bush updated Max Weber's 100-year-old case that a capitalist society is necessarily based on restraining impulses rather than giving in to them. In fact, Bush seemed to be reading pages written by our most prominent neo-Weberian, Daniel Bell. In 1996, Bell lamented, our “culture [was] no longer concerned with how to work and achieve, but with how to spend and enjoy.” By Bell's lights—and apparently by Bush's too—we can regain our grace only through a “recognition of the limits of resources and the priority of needs, individual and social, over unlimited appetites and wants.”

Such an argument gets capitalism, and America, all wrong. Think-

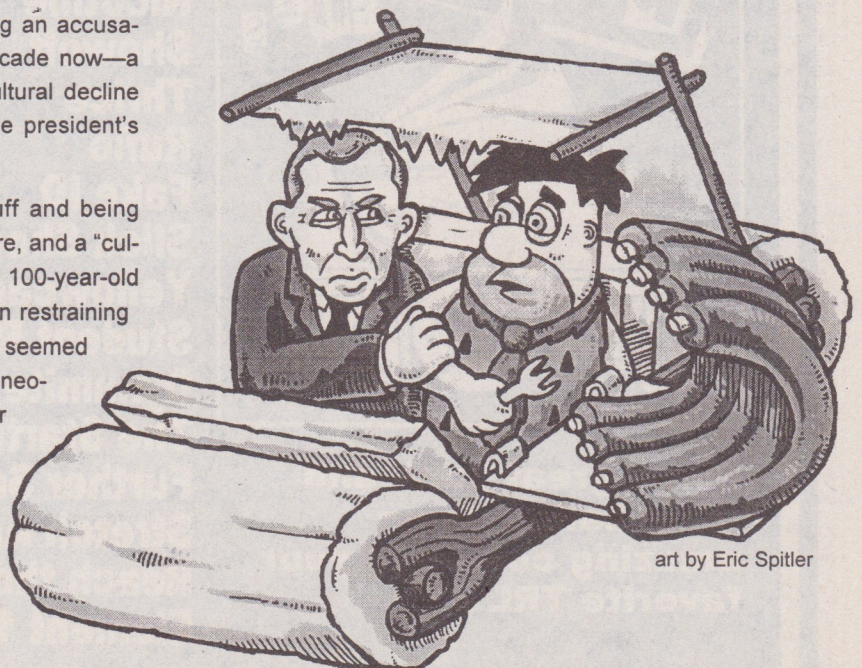
ing about all “the goods we can accumulate” has never been a distraction from being responsible, or from caring about others. Indeed, it is precisely the availability of virtually unlimited goods that structures work effort by giving people something to work toward.

Which bring us to *The Flintstones*, the credit sequence of which is tattooed on the American psyche in a way no State of the Union address ever could be: Fred is working hard in the rock quarry right until the whistle blows. He immediately drives home to a house packed with toys and stuff, picks up the wife and kid—even the family pet. Then they head out for a night on the town: a movie and a slab of ribs so huge it flips the car over.

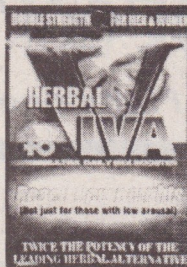
Contrary to Bush (and Bell), such plus-sized pleasures, such decadent desires, are the very engine of the capitalism—of the consumerism—that has come to define America, perhaps especially to our enemies. Fred is a good man not despite his desires but because of them. He works hard because there's a payoff for him and those he cares about.

Immediately after the attacks, President Bush was widely mocked for imploring people to go shopping, to get on with their normal lives, to do anything to show the terrorists that they couldn't destroy our way of life. At times, he seemed to stop just short of telling people to have more sex to enrage Osama bin Laden and company. Months later, he's singing a different tune, one that might well ignore the world that Todd Beamer and others died trying to protect. ❧

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art by Eric Spittler



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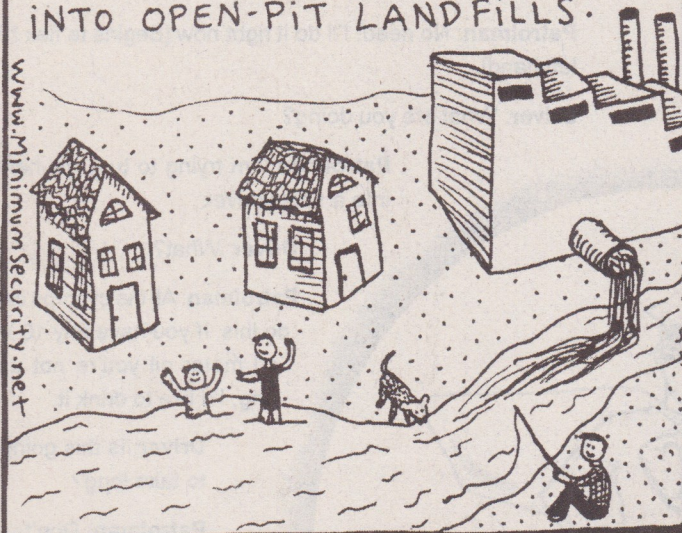
The fish turned belly-up, spurted blood and shed their skin within 10 seconds.



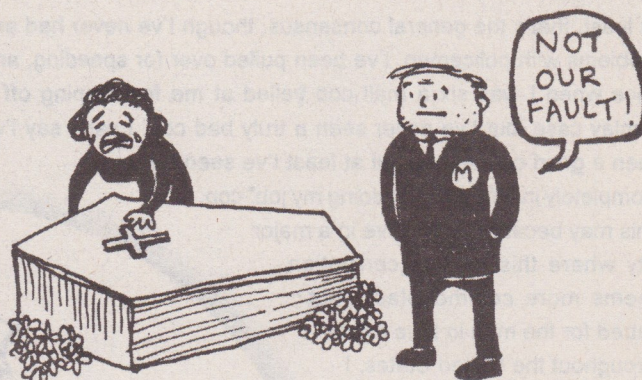
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Stephanie McMillan

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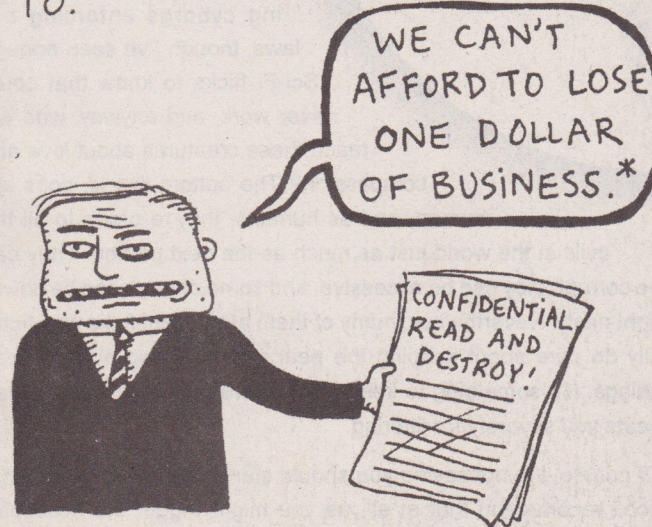


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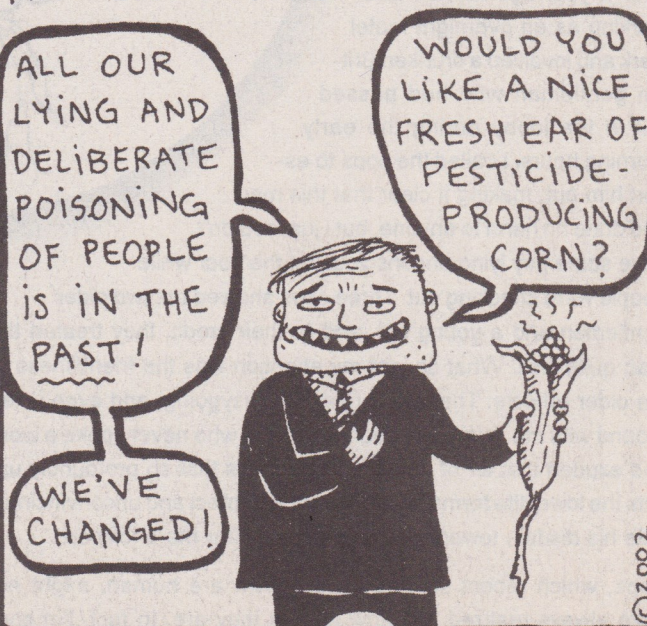
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Probing the Humanity of Police or . . . Why You Shouldn't Hug a Cop

by Adam Finley
art by Marty Kelley

You don't hear too many stories about law enforcement officers, at least not ones that show the officers in a favorable light. Even if someone did have a pleasant story to convey about their experiences with a friendly policeman, they probably wouldn't tell anyone because it's simply not cool to like cops. They're arrogant, power-hungry lap dogs of a corrupt system, they take advantage of people's ignorance, and I'm pretty sure they were indirectly responsible for Fox's decision to cancel Futurama.

At least, that's the general consensus, though I've never had any problems with policemen. I've been pulled over for speeding, and once when I was six a mall cop yelled at me for jumping off a display case, but I've never seen a truly bad cop. I can't say I've seen a good cop, either, but at least I've seen the "completely indifferent, just doing my job" cop. This may be because I don't live in a major city where this kind of corruption seems more commonplace, but hatred for the men in blue exists throughout the United States. I chalk most of this up to people jumping on the "I Hate Cops" bandwagon, but there is some point of origin to this hatred. This sort of animosity doesn't just bubble from out of nowhere.

My last one-on-one encounter with policemen happened over a year ago while I was working as an overnight motel clerk and involved a drunken British gentleman who had passed out in the lobby during the early morning hours. I called the cops to escort him out, making it clear that this man had done no harm to anyone, but I just couldn't have some guy lying unconscious on the floor while people were checking out. Three cops showed up, two older gentlemen and a young lad, and to their credit, they treated the man quite well. What caught my attention was the friendliness of the older officers: They were relaxed, easygoing, and even joked around with me. It was the younger officer who never spoke a word and exuded that air of detached cockiness that so profoundly upsets the lower life forms he has sworn to protect and unconvincingly hide his disdain toward. He didn't even offer me a lollipop.

Cops, which recent studies have shown are human, might not have always realized just how human they are. In fact, I'm con-

vinced that some of them, when they first join the force, develop slight delusions of grandeur.

Patrolman: Do you know why I pulled you over?

Driver: Was I speeding?

Patrolman: You were going 65 in a 45, and you have a broken taillight.

Driver: I'll be sure to get that fixed.

Patrolman: No need, I'll do it right now [Begins to flex his left hand].

Driver: What are you doing?

Patrolman: I'm trying to turn my hand into a screwdriver.

Driver: What?

Patrolman: All the cyborgs can do this. If you have any 10-W 40 motor oil you're not using, I'd like to drink it.

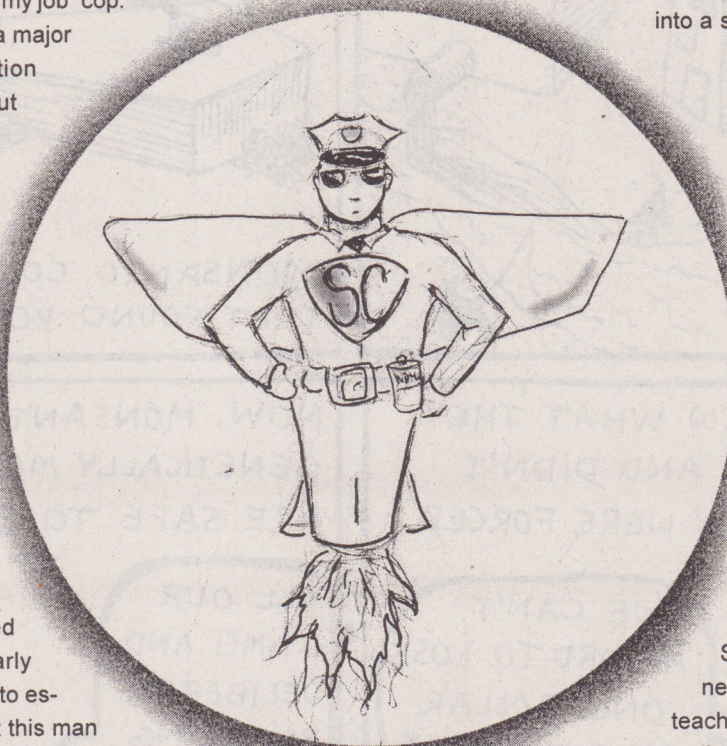
Driver: Is this going to take long?

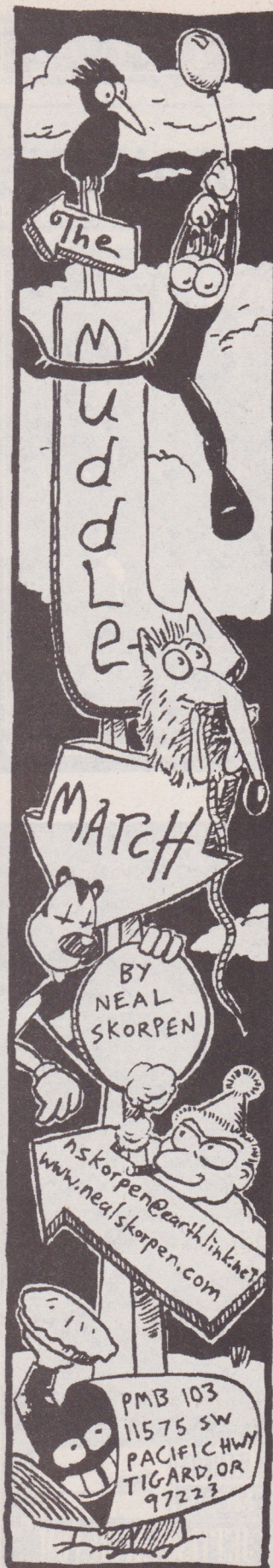
Patrolman: Don't make me kill you with my laser vision, sniveling mortal.

Maybe we'd be better off having cyborgs enforcing our laws, though I've seen enough Sci-Fi flicks to know that could never work, and anyway, who will teach these creatures about love and compassion? The bottom line is, cops are human, and as humans, they're prone to all the

evils in the world just as much as the next person. They can be corrupt, they can be excessive, and some of them can be downright nasty. Nevertheless, many of them are decent folks who actually do care about keeping the peace and serving other human beings. It's something to keep in mind the next time a policeman beats you severely for littering.

Of course, I'm not saying you should start hugging cops. In fact, I don't recommend that at all, as you might trigger the helicopter blades that are stored beneath their titanium exoskeleton, and we all know how difficult it is to get those things back in place. ☎

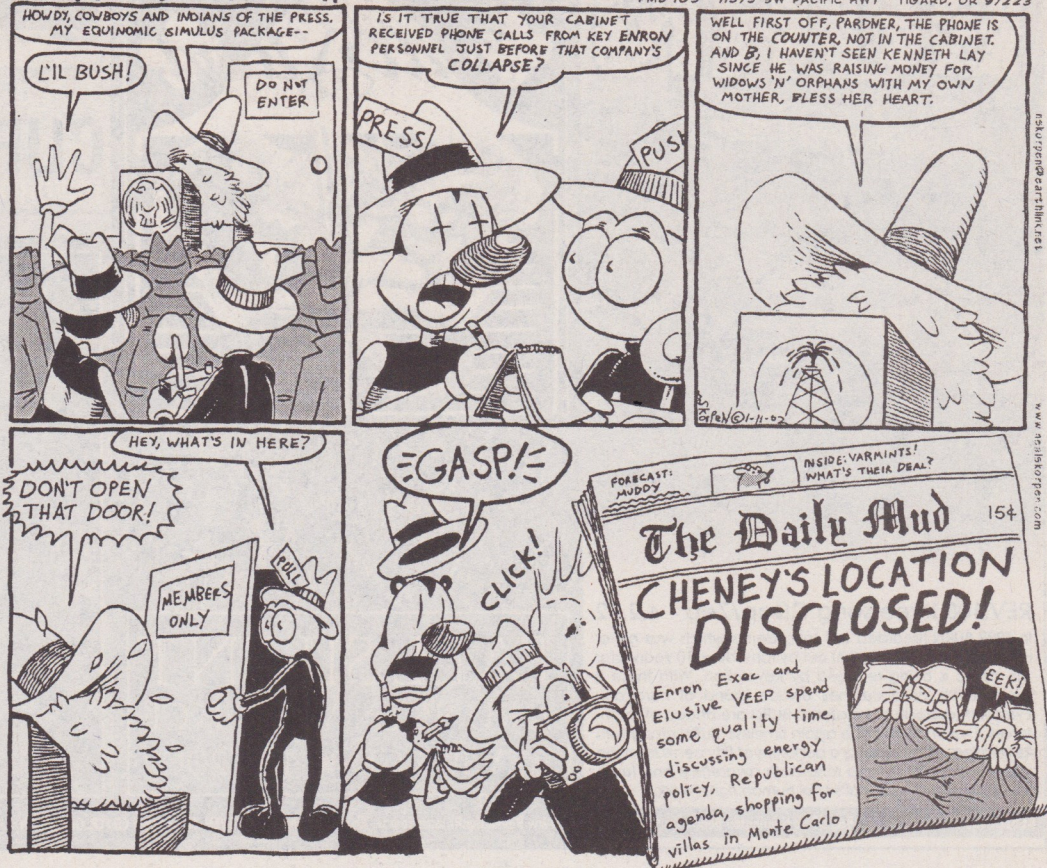




The MUDDLEMATCH

BY NEAL SKORPEN

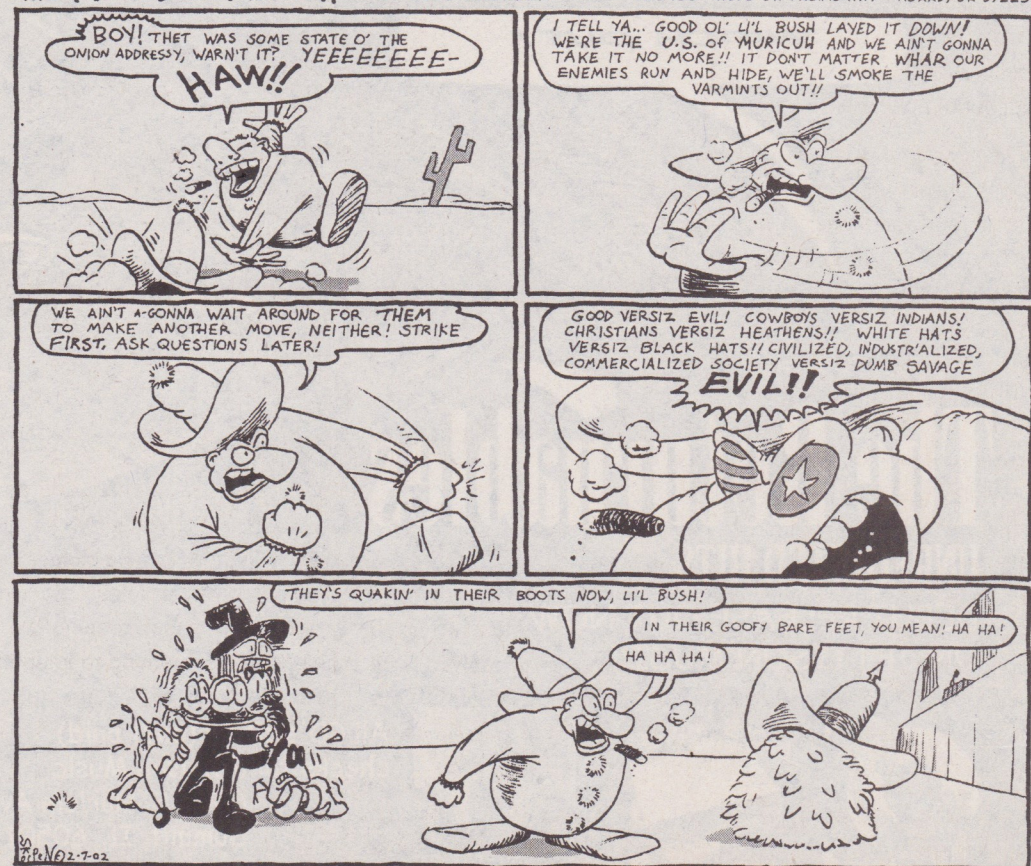
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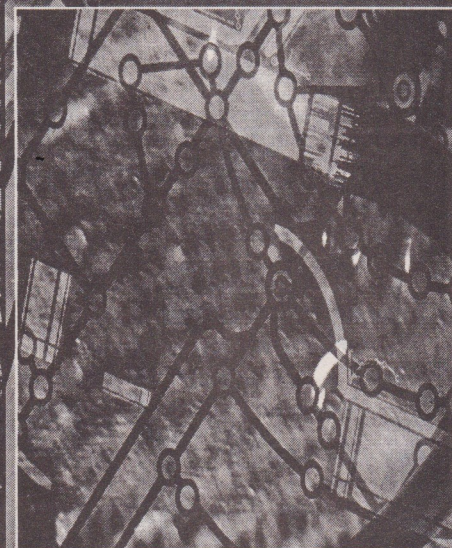
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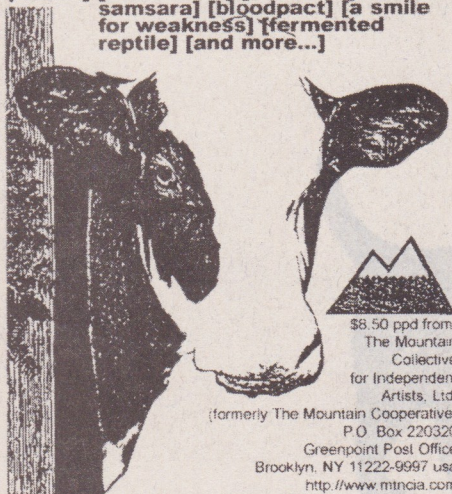
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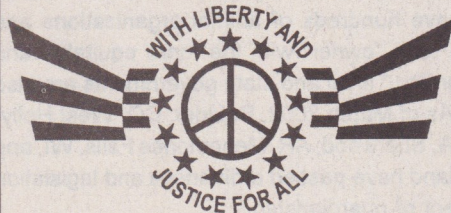
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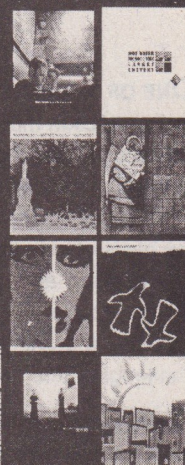
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The CoNCEPT oF GUARDIANSHIP

Elliot M. Katz, DVM

ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS in the animal protection movement is the campaign to elevate the status of animals beyond that of property, commodities, and things. Historically, humanity has regarded our relationship with other animals in terms of ownership. This conception of animals as property is the basis of both our legal relationship with animals and our everyday thinking about their place in our lives. Because almost all animal abuse and exploitation stems from viewing animals as property, the animal protection movement is becoming unified in challenging this demeaning, cruel, and unjust perspective.

The language of ownership has long played a vital role in movements seeking social change. Abolitionists, suffragists, and child advocates have challenged language to end the oppression of people as property. Now animal advocates are addressing the same concern, challenging the belief that it is appropriate for people to "own" animals. Viewing another being—human or animal—as property allows us to discount their interests and disregard their desires. It allows us to act towards others in the same manner we would act towards property—we can neglect, mistreat, abandon, exploit, and destroy them because it is our right to do so as owners of the "property."

There are two major contexts in which animal protectionists are currently pursuing the campaign to elevate animals from the status of property: in codified and everyday language, and in the courts.

First, the campaign challenges the use of terms such as "owner," which subtly but consistently reinforce perceptions of animals as property. Not only have hundreds of animal organizations and shelters replaced the term "owner" with the more equitable and responsible term "guardian," local and state governments are also making the change. As of March 2002, Boulder, CO, West Hollywood and Berkeley, CA, Sherwood, AR, Menomonee Falls, WI, and the State of Rhode Island have passed ordinances and legislation recognizing the concept of guardianship.

At the same time these important changes in language are occurring, the United States court system is addressing a number of groundbreaking cases concerning the concept of animals as property. Time after time, the courts have given animals back to "owners" who had severely abused them, due to the strength of property rights at the expense of the needs of individual animals. However, these events are becoming less commonplace as courts recognize the interests and rights of animals. For example, in the late 1990s, a Vermont court disregarded a man's will directing that his horses be killed after his death. According to the court, the horses should not be treated as mere property to be killed as the "owner" had wished, but rather as individuals with needs and interests of their own.

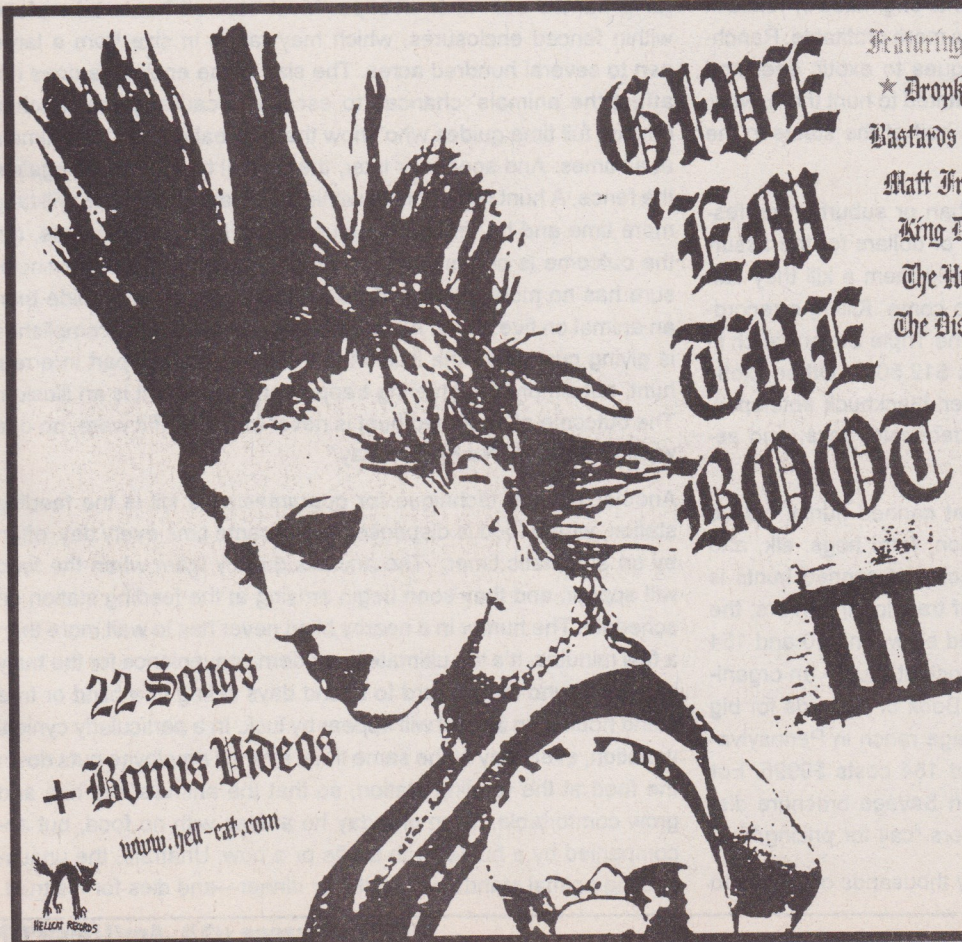
One of the most promising signs for the future of this work is how greatly it has resonated within the movement, gaining support

As our language and laws begin to support this new relationship, people will take more responsibility in their actions towards animals and grant them greater protection and respect. By working at

Dr. Katz is Founder and President of In Defense of Animals. A native of New York City, Dr. Katz is a graduate of Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduation, he practiced small animal veterinary medicine in the New York Metropolitan area. In 1983, he founded In Defense of Animals (IDA), an 80,000 member, non-profit international animal rights organization dedicated to raising the status of animals beyond that of mere property, commodities, or things. IDA fights for the rights, welfare, and habitats of animals through undercover investigations, grassroots activism, rescue operations, lobbying, lawsuits, and in its sanctuary for abused animals in rural Mississippi and its chimpanzee sanctuary in Cameroon, Africa.

Make an IMPACT

If you have not already done so, please join IDA's "They Are Not Our Property, We Are Not Their Owners" campaign. You can begin by using the word guardian in place of owner when referring to companion animals. If owner must be used, put the word in quotation marks to indicate a negative connotation. Taking this step will help promote a greater responsibility to and a deeper respect for the animals with whom we share our planet. If you would like to help or to know more about the campaign, please contact IDA today at ida@idausa.org or (415) 388-9641.



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Canned Hunts: Slaughter by Any Other Name

by Norm Phelps
art by Charley Deppner

In 1994, UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATORS for the Humane Society of the United States videotaped a bow hunt for a Corsican ram at a commercial game ranch. When the first arrow slams into his flank, the ram turns and lunges against the fence that holds him captive. He bellows with pain and fright. Twenty yards away, his tormentor reloads and lets fly another broadhead, again into the flank, only wounding him more painfully. The hunter is deliberately aiming away from the head, neck, and chest to avoid spoiling the "trophy" that is the object of his hunt. "If you fall," he yells at the helpless ram, "fall the right way. I don't want you bending my arrow." By now, the slowly dying animal is huddled against the bottom of the fence, trembling pitifully. But the hunter has no pity. After six arrows in the flank and sides, the guide puts the unfortunate ram out of his agony with a bullet.

Welcome to the world of canned hunts!

Killing for Dollars

A canned hunt is a commercial hunt for animals who have virtually no chance to escape. The point is to make it easy and convenient for someone with more money than time or skill to bag a "trophy." A relatively new phenomenon, canned hunts originated in Texas in the 1950's as a way to make cattle ranches more profitable. Ranchers began applying cattle-raising techniques to exotic deer and charging large fees to "sportsmen" who wanted to hunt them. Now, there are several thousand in more than half of the states in the lower forty-eight.

Most customers of canned hunts are urban or suburban professionals who are willing to pay thousands of dollars for the assurance that one or two days hunting will yield them a kill they can brag about at cocktail parties for years to come. Killing a record-book markhor, a Middle Eastern goat, at the Triple Seven ranch in Texas, for example, would set you back \$12,500. Other exotic animals offered up for killing are axis deer, blackbuck antelopes, impalas, mouflon rams, musk oxen, wildebeests, yaks, and zebras.

Exotic species are not the only victims at canned hunts. Native species are also available, including bison, feral hogs, elk, and moose. But the most popular native species at canned hunts is the animal that is also a favorite victim of traditional hunters: the white-tailed deer. A white-tailed buck rated between 140 and 154 on the scoring scale of the Boone and Crockett Club — an organization that maintains a kind of Guinness Book of Records for big game — will bring \$5995 at the Glen Savage ranch in Pennsylvania, while a buck rated between 170 and 184 costs \$9995. For bucks with a higher B&C rating, the Glen Savage brochure discreetly suggests that prospective customers "call for pricing."

Why, you may wonder, would hunters pay thousands of dollars to

kill an animal as populous as the white-tailed deer? First, it takes several years for a deer to grow a trophy rack. But with hunters killing 30% or more of the whitetail herd every year, a male rarely lives longer than three to four years, not long enough to develop prize antlers.

Second, for both whitetails and exotic species, the customers are shelling out the big bucks for a guarantee. Oak Creek Whitetail Ranch in Missouri brags that "We specialize in 100% success rate," while Pennsylvania's Tioga Boar Hunting Preserve assures prospective clients who have to hurry back to their offices that hunts never take "more than two days; all hunts are guaranteed." And if the weekend frontiersman barely knows one end of a rifle from the other, that's no problem at Tioga, where, according to the brochure, "kills are usually made from 25 to 100 yards," point blank range for a modern hunting rifle. Many canned hunts advertise "No Kill, No Pay."

No Kill, No Pay

Game ranches can make these promises because canned hunts are staged under circumstances that make it virtually impossible for a hunted animal to escape. Most canned hunts take place within fenced enclosures, which may range in size from a large pen to several hundred acres. The size of the enclosure does not affect the animals' chances to escape because game ranches employ full time guides who know the whereabouts of the animals at all times. And sooner or later, the animal has to run up against the fence. A hunt taking place within a 500-acre enclosure will take more time and be more strenuous than a hunt on five acres, but the outcome is no less certain. An animal in the 500-acre enclosure has no more chance of escaping the hunter and guide than an animal on five acres. All that the larger enclosure accomplishes is giving customers the illusion that they are taking part in a real hunt, not simply slaughtering trapped animals. But it is an illusion. The outcome of a canned hunt is never in doubt. If it were, no one would advertise "No Kill, No Pay."

Another popular technique for guaranteeing a kill is the feeding station, where food is dispensed at the same time every day, often by an automatic timer. The animals quickly learn when the food will appear, and they soon begin arriving at the feeding station on schedule. The hunter in a nearby blind never has to wait more than a few minutes. It's the ultimate in modern convenience for the busy executive who can't afford to spend days sitting in a blind or tree stand hoping an animal will appear by luck. In a particularly cynical variation, every day at the same time, a ranch employee puts down the food at the feeding station, so that the animals see him and grow comfortable. Then one day he arrives with no food, but accompanied by a hunter with a rifle or a bow. Unafraid, the unsuspecting animal stands and waits for dinner—and dies for his trust.

Unethical by Any Standard

None of the traditional arguments that are used to defend hunting could apply to canned hunts; not by even the wildest stretch of the imagination. They serve no wildlife management function; they do not teach respect for nature; and they do not hone skills or promote self-reliance. They are simply death for dollars. Jim Posewitz was a Montana state wildlife biologist for 32 years. Founder of Orion: The Hunters' Institute, he is much in demand as a speaker by hunting and conservation groups. In his book *Beyond Fair Chase*, Posewitz says, "Fundamental to ethical hunting is the idea of fair chase. This concept addresses the balance between the hunter and the hunted. It is a balance that allows hunters to occasionally succeed while animals generally avoid being taken." The whole point of canned hunts is to destroy that balance. Outdoor writer Ted Kerasote, whose book *Blood Ties* is an impassioned defense of hunting, accused canned hunts of turning hunting "into this caged, paid affair, and it bears no relationship to what hunting is, was, and could be." (*Westchester County Weekly*, 7-29-1999)

Alternative Livestock and Outdoor Slaughterhouses

State wildlife agencies are often opposed to canned hunts on ethical and scientific grounds, but for political reasons, they may be unable to speak out. Support for canned hunts comes primarily from state agriculture departments, which see the animals as "alternative livestock" and canned hunts as a way to increase the profitability of farms and ranches. From their point of view, allowing hunters to "only occasionally succeed," while the animals "generally avoid being taken" would be a hopelessly inefficient way to run a business. They treat hunting as an alternative form of animal slaughter and hunting enclosures as outdoor slaughterhouses. But thus far, due to their newness and their pretense at being "hunts" rather than slaughter, game ranches and hunting preserves have generally avoided the kind of regulation to which traditional livestock producers and slaughterhouses—at least in theory—are subject, such as health inspections. More importantly, these outdoor slaughterhouses should be subject to the federal Humane Slaughter Act, which requires that an animal be rendered immediately unconscious and not allowed to suffer in the process of being slaughtered. Hunting, even under the conditions of a canned hunt, inevitably entails a significant wounding rate in which the animals suffer

for a period of minutes or hours before being, in the euphemism of the hunting community, "dispatched." Canned hunts could never meet the standards of the federal statute.

A Plague Waiting to Happen

A growing concern among wildlife biologists and state wildlife agencies is disease. The high concentration of animals kept at game ranches creates an ideal environment for the outbreak and spread of diseases capable of wiping out entire populations. Since game ranchers often sell their stock back and forth and ship them from state to state, any outbreak of disease immediately becomes a national threat. And, because there is no way to guarantee that animals will never escape from the ranch, the risk of transmission to the wild population is ever present. An outbreak of tuberculosis among wild deer in Michigan is suspected, although not proven, to have originated on a game ranch.

But the disease that frightens biologists and wildlife agencies the most is transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE), more commonly known as chronic wasting disease (CWD), a highly communicable, fatal disease of deer and elk that is similar to mad cow disease. Thus far, there have been no documented

cases of CWD being transmitted to cattle or human

beings, but this is a disease about which we still know very little. According

to the US Department of Agriculture, CWD has been found in

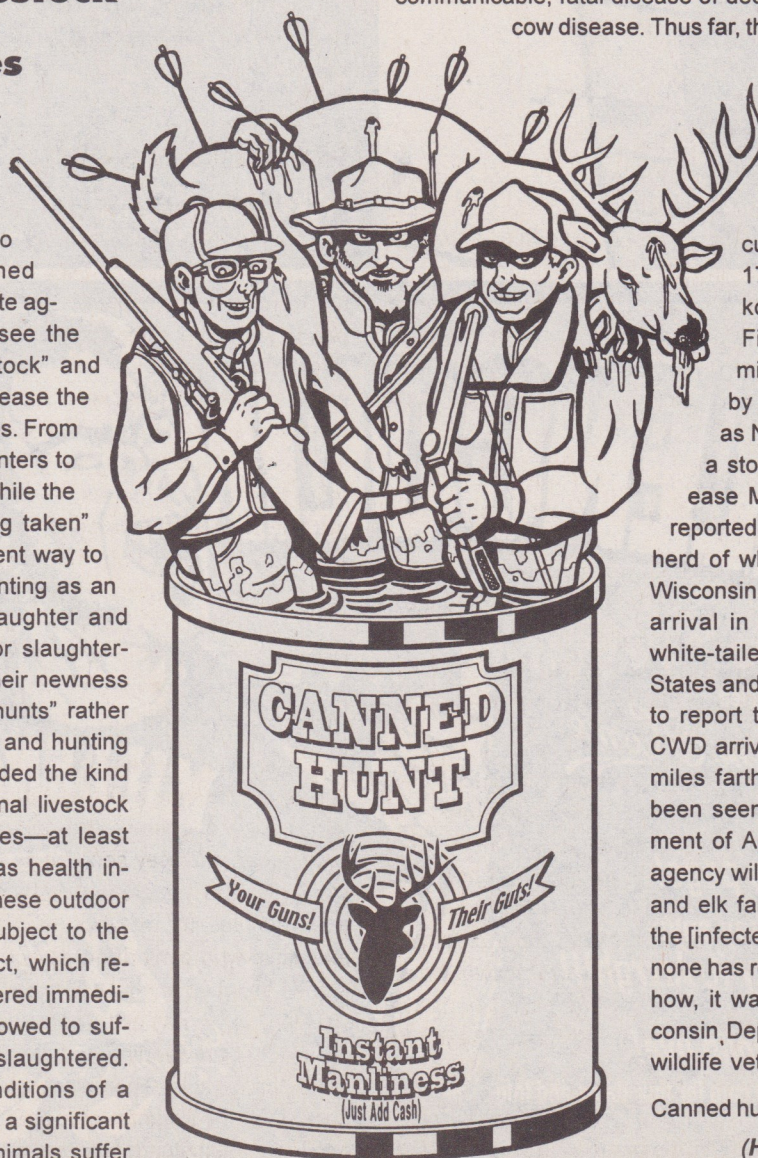
17 farmed elk herds in South Dakota and other western states. First found in wild herds in Wyoming and Colorado in the 1980's,

by 2001 it had spread as far east as Nebraska. On March 4, 2002, in a story titled "Chronic Wasting Disease Moving East," the Denver Post

reported that CWD had been found in a herd of white-tailed deer near Madison, Wisconsin. Wrote reporter Theo Stein, "It's arrival in Wisconsin places 20 million white-tailed deer in the eastern United States and Canada at risk." Stein went on to report that "Officials are unsure how CWD arrived in Wisconsin, which is 900 miles farther east than the disease had been seen before. But the U.S. Department of Agriculture spokesmen said the agency will investigate the dozens of deer and elk farms near the game unit where the [infected] deer were shot, even though none has reported a case of CWD. 'Somehow, it was human-assisted,' said [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wildlife veterinarian Julie] Langerberg."

Canned hunts offend even seasoned hunt-

(HUNTS, continued on page 58)



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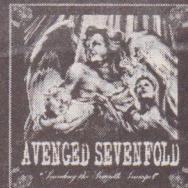
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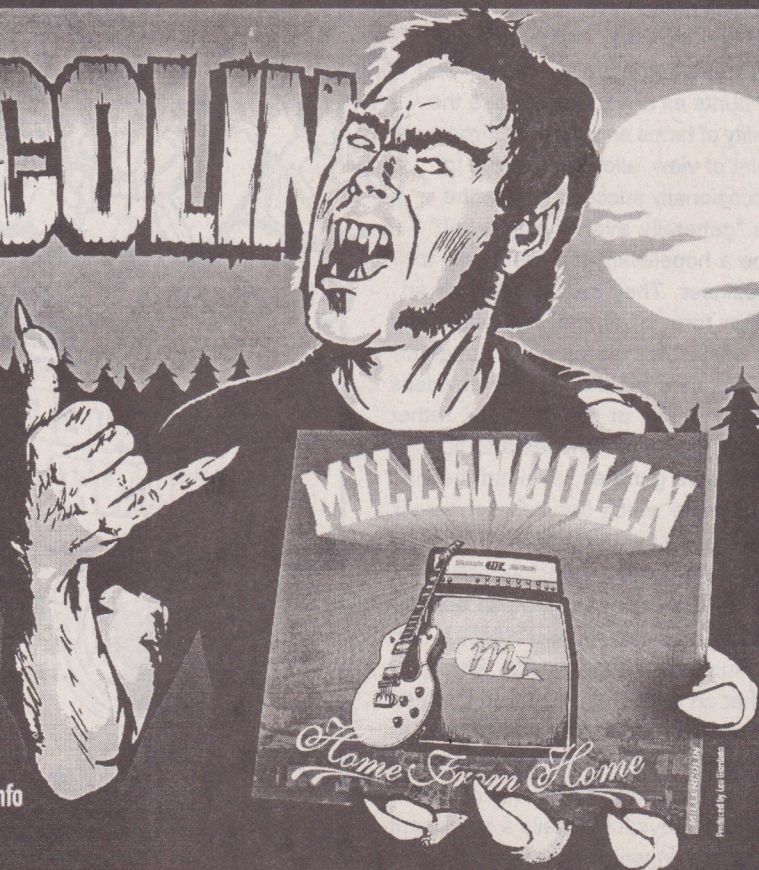
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TOP PICKS

Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.



Boards of Canada • Geogaddi • Warp Records • When BoC's last album, "Music has the Right to Children" came out, rumors abounded that they were into the occult due to their incomprehensible voices speaking in tongues. Geogaddi, their first album in four years, is 66 minutes and 6 seconds long. Hmmm. Their melodic, melancholic sound is, as usual, peppered with children's voices and beautiful keyboard lines. And is that Leslie Nielsen on "Dandelion?" Somehow, BoC manage to make their tracks sound both electronic and organic at the same time. (AL)

Coheed and Cambria • The Second Stage Turbine Blade • Equal Vision • Some bands leave me at a loss for words upon first listen. I had been told these guys are good. I had been lied to, though. "Good" understates the abilities and quality of music offered up by this upstate New York quartet. Combining melodic emotional rock with the ferocity of hardcore, Coheed and Cambria create songs that tell stories and pound the ears with skillful musicianship and an energy that gets under your skin. The album opens up reminding me of Hankshaw (that Florida emo band with male vocals that sounded more like a girl) but then transitions into sounds that are reminiscent of At The Drive-In's best material. Despite the heartfelt nature each song is delivered with, aggression and intensity is never sacrificed. While this isn't purely hardcore, it most certainly is not the stereotyped, sappy nature of emorock. Somewhere in between, Coheed and Cambria has found itself a niche and few bands can touch them. (CM)

Dianogah • Millions of Brazilians • Southern Records • It's been a while since Dianogah's last album, *Battle Champions*, and in that time they modified their sound a bit. Not limited to the core trio of two bass guitars and drums, they added electric guitars, plenty of keys and even a clarinet to round out their compositions. Their sound is still centered around the two dueling bass players, but fuller. (AL)

DragnaSlimDublin & The Beatcave Hermit • There Is No Easy Definition • Underground Sounds of America • This amazing album is a cross between Beck and Cake with a touch of *Paul's Boutique*. These two guys have a different style while spitting rhymes over live instruments, telling great stories that add a twist to our everyday lives. Incorporating a multitude of sounds with original, creative lyrics this disc is a fresh breathe of air while mixing positive hip-hop and utilizing jazz, funk, soul and funk. "United Front" touches on war and our government, "Please" is a trippy tale about safe sex and "Folly: Chapters 1 & 2" is about some bullies who get taught a lesson. The way all of this is delivered is what makes this album shine. (JC)

Illogic • Got Lyrics? • Weightless Recordings • I won't even mention where he's from. The only thing that matters is that you need to hear what this guy has to say. Tongue twisting lyrics are delivered with confidence and something worthwhile to say with the intent to prove those who did not believe in him wrong. This cat is down with crews like Definitive Jux and Rhymesayers Entertainment. His funky beats are laid out by Blueprint and are the perfect landscape for this emcee. The whole disc is

tight but notably "Too Many Times", "Day By Day" and "Breaking Bread" (which Blueprint rhymes on). The surprise of it all is the hidden spoken word material included. This project is his second release, can't wait for the third. Got Lyrics? Illogic does. (JC)

Piebald • We Are The Only Friends We Have • Big Wheel Recreation • Piebald's work spans more than seven years and with this full-length release they offer up their most solid and powerful release to date. The sound is thick, tight and melodic as all get out. The opening track is a catchy and lyrically amusing tune about the band's tour van. And that's just the beginning of what is a really strong rock album featuring sometimes quirky, sometimes personal, and always intelligent lyrics. The guitars have just the right amount of feedback, the basslines are super thick and the drums bounce along with precise fills and tempo changes aplenty. Vocally, Piebald always delivers. With the more straightforward approach to this album, Travis' vocals get even more attention and deservedly so. While bands like Jimmy Eat World have rock-a-fied their sound in a way that took their music backwards, Piebald definitely takes a leap forward. (CM)

Red Shift Mantra • Deep Field Image • Manteis Recordings • Just over a year ago, Red Shift Mantra released a self titled EP of four beautiful songs combining ambient textures with electronic effects and ethereal vocals. Their latest release, *Deep Field Image*, includes three of the four songs, plus five new tracks that expand on their sound. Their trance-inducing style is augmented by actual beats in a few songs, including a house beat on "Kobayashi Maru," and a jazzy one on "Prominence." (AL)

Sage Francis • Personal Journals • anticon • Aesop Rock and, now, Sage Francis keep being mentioned as the next big thing for hip-hop. But the fact is, they already are a big thing; people just can't fathom their music. And while they're getting mad clout and respect in some press outlets, they're unlikely to ever "hit the big time." Which probably suits Paul Francis (aka Sage Francis) just fine. Already a well-known freestyler and slam poet, Sage finally delivers some recorded shit for those craving to hear what all the hype is about. Listen up, 'cause you'll learn quickly. The opening track rages across rapid drum and bass beats with Sage firing rhyme after rhyme, line after line. Then it flows into track two, a similarly driving cut but with a much deeper funk and big basslines. And it goes on from there (don't miss horn-heavy track four), morphing from track to track (18 of 'em) with Sage never once letting up on his flawless flows. Yeah, Sage may be the "next big thing", but there's not reason to wait and see - get on board this runaway rhyme train before you get run down by it. (CM)

Sewing With Nancie • Take A Look at Yourself • Fastmusic • I love it. These guys seem like a pack of knuckleheads that you would love to go get a beer with. Funny songs with a strong melodic sensibility make this a disc that you will enjoy. These boys, our neighbors to the north, are Canadian, but we will not hold that against them. They are way cooler than most other Canadians like Micheal J. Fox. I'll bet that they could kick his ass. They are a really good band. (MK)

Taking Back Sunday • Tell All Your Friends • Victory • I remember when I first heard Save's the Day's "Thru Being Cool" and was excited about pop-punk/emo, and then being disappointed with everything that they released after that. Taking Back Sunday is what I wished they would have sounded like with their next release. I was blown away by this debut release. They are cute and poppy, but at the same time they keep their sound edgy. This is a good one worth owning. (KM)

The Frequency Organization • Fluke • The Frequency Organization • Exciting, new, and penetrating, this album has some important things to say, and an unbelievably otherworldly way of saying them. Few bands are brave enough to at times fall back to some 70s style rock chord progressions and then throw some robot-sounding voice modulation in your face and kick your ass with haunting alien riffs, and then coast along on some gentle acoustic guitar. The album is well produced to boot, and sounds clear as a bell. (DP)

The Long Winters • The Worst You Can Do Is Harm • Barsuk • Talk about being taken by surprise, I didn't think too much of this CD when I picked it up out of the stack. I was in love with it on the first listen. Amazing songwriting, amazing lyrics, personal and poignant. The sound is inventive, creative, experimental at times, but never annoying. It just works, as a whole this CD just fits perfectly into its self. (KM)

The Miracle of 86 • Self-titled • Immigrant Sun • This is my new favorite band I think. This album and this band are simply put amazing. 10 songs that will have you in love with them the first you hear them. Imagine acoustic songs and then plug them in, turn them up, and let them rock. All the lyrics will have you thinking and the music will make you move, the song writing style mixes these two elements perfectly. (KM)

The Wage Of Sin • The Product of Deceit and Loneliness • Immigrant Sun • I hesitate to even mention this is an all girl hardcore band. I say that because it's a fucking amazing hardcore album period, and the all girl part shouldn't really matter. This CD will scald the inside of your head, it will make your ears bleed, it will break your stereo speakers, and it will make the old man who lives next door come over and tell you to turn it down. Wage of Sin is one of the best new hardcore bands out there and I can't wait to see them live. (KM)

Thrice • The Illusion of Safety • Sub-City • "...sonic and emotive..." says the record label press release, yeah I'll take that. At first it comes off like a hammer of a hard hitting wall of noise with traditional hardcore elements of screaming and earth shaking beats, along the way you have some singing that nicely offsets the force of the screaming, and more importantly doesn't sound wimpy. Thrice have a good thing going indeed. (KM)

Various Artists • The Funky 16 Corners • Stones Throw Records • Fans of the funk rejoice! Stones Throw has assembled 22 tracks from 16 artists of the '60s and '70s you may never have heard from before. If you're tired of the same old tired funk comps, then get your mitts on *The Funky 16 Corners*. Try not to trip over yourself as you inevitably get up and dance to these should-be classics. (AL)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

CD releases

23 Skidoo • *Seven Songs* • Ronin Records • Curiously titled *Seven Songs* (there are eight tracks), this album revisits 23 Skidoo's 1981 release. At this time they were still a traditional band, though their music would venture into the experimental realm, heavy on the percussion and the funk. They also played around with ambient textures and spacious atmospheres, for a moody effect (AL)

23 Skidoo • *Urban Gamelan* • Ronin Records • Originally recorded in 1984, *Urban Gamelan* is divided into two parts (once upon a time, albums were released on vinyl, two sided discs called records). The first includes avant-funk, reggae and Eastern percussion. For part two they ditch their instruments and pick up a whole bunch of metal objects and bang their way into a tribute to Indonesian indigenous music. (AL)

764-Hero • *Nobody Knows This is Everywhere* • Tiger Style Records • *Nobody Knows This is Everywhere* is 764-Hero's third album, and it maintains their indie rock sound intact, only a bit more polished. The guitars have plenty of hooks, with elements of emo and even blues. If you like Built to Spill or Modest Mouse, check out these guys. (AL)

All The Dead Pilots • *Easily Lost In The Present* • Ambiguous City/Hyphenated-American • This heavy indie band out of Baltimore delivers a powerful sound behind grungy, yet melodic vocals. The music pushes forward with authority and the production helps out the drums, guitar, and bass lines each to stand out on their own. Songs contain good lyrics, mostly about faith and believing in lines like "who's name do you cry for?" and "Who gives you your life, so you can contemplate it?" This is an overall uplifting experience. (JC)

Anti-Flag • *Mobilize* • A-F Records • You better mobilize yourself to the record store to get this CD. Not only does it include eight brand new tracks, but it also includes eight tracks recorded live last December. If that's not enough to get you out the door, the limited edition comes with a free sampler with one song from every A-F Records release so far. (AL)

Anti-Pop Consortium • *Arrhythmia* • Warp • This release of progressive hip-hop is carried along by a raw, lo-fi, sonic sound bouncing between synth and bass. Crazy sound effects sneak up on you from bongos, a ping-pong ball, screeching tires and vocal rants. Production is done by Earl Blaize, but each member – Priest, Beans, M. Sayyid – contributed beats, and each brings their own style lyrically, intended upon demolishing the hip-hop sound and building their own. "Mind-blowing" lyrics delivered in poetry slam fashion are a lot to take in, beats jump around a bit and space out at times, distancing themselves from the crowd in the underground. (JC)

Aspera • *Bird's Fly* • Suicide Squeeze Records • Sporting a new name and a new sound, Aspera (formerly Aspera Ad Astra) follow up their last album with *Bird's Fly*, a six song EP. Organs are everywhere, and drum beats are almost nonexistent. The sound is not unlike that of an old record player with speed problems. (AL)

Audio Learning Center • *Friendships Often Fade* • Vagrant • I didn't quite know what to make of these guys on the first listen. Hailing from the Pacific Northwest, I really hadn't heard much of them. It's subtle sounds that crescendo into powerful and potent songs create a good record. Not unlike a poppy Sunny Day Real Estate. (KM)

Ballboy • *Club Anthems* • Manifesto Records • After gaining popularity in the UK, Ballboy gathered their best songs from their first three EPs and put them in their US debut, *Club Anthems*. Gordon McIntyre's vocals are emotional and personal, with an unapologetic Scottish accent. Whether listening to the acoustic "Public Park," or the hypnotic "Leave the Earth Behind You and Take a Walk Into the Sunshine," you will be impressed

with Ballboy's indie pop style and musicianship. (AL)

Bats & Mice • *Believe It Mammals* • Lovitt • Emo dirge and still so brilliant. Quiet in a way that will keep you up all night, Richmond, VA's Bats & Mice bring the noise, they just bring it quietly. Featuring members of such amazing bands as Sleepytime Trio, Milemarker, and Four Hundred Years to name a few, they don't sound a whole lot like their past, but more the obvious next progressive step. (KM)

Behemoth • *Ohio* • Buford • Diaphragm • There must be another Behemoth 'cause that "OHIO" thing is silly. But there's nothing silly about the music this five-piece (featuring three, yes three, guitars) presents. Each of the six tracks is heavy on feedback and has plenty of crunch for all your garage-rockin' needs. The intense, building energy of their songs probably leads to a lot of spilt beer at their live shows. (CM)

Billion Dollar Mission • *The Cup* • Immigrant Sun • I fell in love with these songs from the first couple cords I think. Billion Dollar Mission bring an amazing driving rock deeply rooted in punk and hardcore, while still being catchy as hell. This debut EP from Norway's Billion Dollar Mission leaves you begging for a full length. (KM)

Blu Mar Ten • *Producer 03* • Good Looking Records • Even though Leo Wyndham and Chris Marigold came from completely different backgrounds (Artificial Intelligence and Sculpture, respectively), it is obvious that they are on the same page when it comes to music. They produce highly danceable drum 'n' bass, or hypnotic downtempo with ease. Songs don't follow traditional song structure, but rather evolve as they develop, without you noticing. (AL)

Bracket • *Live in a Dive* • Fat Wreck Chords • For the second installment in the Fat Wreck Chords Live series, pop-punk quartet Bracket take the stage and perform 17 songs from their repertoire, including some songs that have been long out of print. The sound quality is amazing, since it was recorded using professional equipment. There is an enhanced portion to the CD, with an interview and a few videos. (AL)

Brando • *Single Crown Postcard* • Recordhead & Mr. Whiggs Records • *Single Crown Postcard* is the latest release from this prolific Bloomington, Indiana band. Guitarist/vocalist Derek Richey serves as the ringleader for this loose collective of musicians and songwriters. The band has written and recorded in a variety of combinations over the past decade, but only in the past two years have the results been released to the world. One listen to *Single Crown Postcard* will leave you wanting more from the Brando vaults. Their Pavement meets Bowie style results in some fantastic indie pop that hardly sounds as if it were recorded on a 4 track studio. (CL)

Brandtson • *Dial In Sounds* • Deep Elm • Brandtson has a kind of pop emo sound that is not entirely uncommon these days. Catchy and sadly predictable sometimes, I find myself wanting to like it more than I do. The vocals are strong, and the guitars do their part to build mostly good songs, just songs that sound so much like so many things you have already heard a million times. (KM)

Brazil • *The New Loud* • Self Released • This band brings a very fluent emo/punk rock sound that feels emotionally powerful with a "backs against the wall" type of attitude. On this six-track release, the high and low tempo changes within the clean and crisp sound meshes well with the "to the point" vocals. "Erasure" is a driving track that comes to a standstill with a mellow pit stop before continuing with smooth vocals over a consistent fusion of instruments from this 4-piece. This disc is good stuff to jam from beginning to end, music that creeps its way to the climax. (JC)

Breach • *Godbox* • Chrome Saint Magnus • Big. Heavy. Scandinavian. No, it's not black metal, it's defiantly got its roots in some of the best hardcore out there. A lot like Snapcase or Refused, but their sound is dirtier giving them kind of a muddled

and mucky sound, kinda like molasses on your hands. There are some elements of Neurosis and even a little Botch. Making this yet another good release from this group of Swedes. (KM)

Brick Layer Cake • *Whatchamacallit* • Touch And Go Records • This album begins with the track "Stars" a slow, grungy, ruthless and feedback heavy intro that verbally attacks the rock society – setting up the rest of the disc. This one-man band out of the Midwest comprised of Todd Trainer keeps it original and goes mainly against the grain on this creative project with a 'no holds barred' approach within the singing/spoken word realm. Vocals are in a deep dark tone along the lines of Type O Negative with the guitar and drum sound being compared to "Black Sabbath on Downers" – quite the mix. The music gets a little repetitious but this album could be a nice stepping-stone for future projects. (JC)

Buffalo Daughter • *I* • Emperor Norton Records • After three years without releasing any full length albums, Buffalo Daughter return with *I*. In it they continue to explore musical trends with nothing but electronics and vocals. Pop plays a big role, whether blended with pseudo metal on "Earth Punk Rockers," or in the electro R & B of "Robot Sings." No two songs are alike, giving you the feeling you are listening to a remix album. (AL)

Burd Early • *Burd Early's Observatory EP* • Anchor and Hope (King Crab) • This 5-song EP is comprised of soft ballads, showcasing Burd's resonant bass voice, with acoustic sounds backing him gently. The album is a journey, as described by Burd: "Track 1 was written while wanting to be somewhere other than where I was. Track 2 was written while wanting to be someone other than who I was. Track 3 is about a place or a space. Track 4 is about going there. Track 5 is about residing there." It's a very low-key place to be, but it's the right place for this record. (DP)

Captain Tonic • *Chair* • self released • Though I'm not a fan of anything remotely resembling country music, I found myself curiously attracted to Captain Tonic's *Chair*. It starts out with "The Distinguished Mr. And Mrs. Ruddle," which could have been written by Calexico. This southwestern mix of country and horns is a preview of things to come for the rest of the album. Also present are elements of jazz, like in "Brother." The lead singer sounds like he could have a second career as an Elvis impersonator with some practice. (AL)

Caural • *Stars on my Ceiling* • Chocolate Industries • This is not your typical instrumental hip hop album. Maybe it's the things Caural samples, but *Stars on my Ceiling* feels somehow off-kilter. Twinkling piano lines and what sounds like a guitar played in reverse are some of the elements that create the mood. Plus, toward the end, the songs progressively slow down until the beats are but just a memory. (AL)

Chore • *The Coastline Fire* • Sonic Unyon • This is very powerful alt/indie rock that is deeply aggressive in an almost hostile kind of way. From the get-go the music is full of high-toned vocals, grungy guitars and piercing percussion alongside lines like "red light shoot out from the inside, crooked coppers kept me upright, they don't know your face so run away" and "I throw down my thanks, and engage in despair, you're running so fast but not going anywhere." The music gets really tense before loosening up and then taking off again to climb that mountain, but never falling down the other side. The crisp, heavy sound on this disc speeds right past the puzzles within these complex lyrics and are worth many listens. This is a great album from front to back, check out "American Machinist" – very intense. (JC)

Chris Keighley • *The Gathering of the Deep* • mp3.com • A man of many hats, Chris Keighley performs all the instruments on his latest album, *The Gathering of the Deep*. Keighley plays a bluesy, Stones-like rock as interpreted by an indie garage rock band. At times, Keighley sounds similar to the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, with fuzzy, out of control guitars and a funky bass line vaguely anchoring the rest of the chaos. The vocals are an afterthought, lurking low in the mix and sung in an almost dis-

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

interested fashion. As with much experimental music, the results are hit and miss. There are some interesting moments, but the album as a whole is inconsistent. (CL)

Clocked In • *Tied To The Mast* • Radical Records • Melodic hardcore from Atlanta, GA, in the vein of Boy Sets Fire, while vocally a little like Hot Water Music. Good, but not brilliant, Clocked In seem to be a work in progress, and this release being more a part of their path and less of a monument to what this band is. While the vocals are strong, the rest of the band's sound is lost and muddled in the production. (KM)

Codename: Rocky • *Infinity* • Glue Factory Records • A lot of energy is felt on this disc as the intensity of this So Cal band is in full force from the get go. Heavy bass lines and hyper drum work with the trombone, sax and trumpet sounds are blended into this solid ska/power punk rock album. (JC)

Conflict • *Now You've Put Your Foot In It* • Go-Kart Records • This disc is less than 14 minutes long and that is plenty. There are only so many songs about Mad Cow Disease that one can comfortably listen to. This is old school punk with that raw sound that you get from the Germs and The Dead Kennedys. They do some interesting things with the vocals, but this is a bit too preachy and self-righteous for my taste. (MK)

Cookie • *Sweat-Soaked & Satisfied* • Infect Records • Immediately the strong female vocals struck me. It took me a while but Sabrina Rockarena (har) sounds a great deal like Cinder Block (from Tilt). I love those throaty, powerful pipes. It definitely adds a tad more "punkness" to the overall feel. Musically, it's uptempo punk garage-rock with lots of guitar feedback, big riffs and tons of melody that reminds me of Sloppy Seconds. This trio probably puts on one hell of a live show. (CM)

Cub Country • *High Uinta High* • Jade Tree • This CD was a sleeper to me, play after play it really grew on me. Defined as alt-country, it stays far away from anything rock-like, and instead has a poetic rural feel, something wide-open and crisp. Something about it makes you want to be walking on a long road in a place without a name with only your thoughts and the stars to keep you company. This is the side project of Jet's to Brazil bass player Jeremy Chatelain, complete with guest appearances from some people you never would have thought you would see on an alt-country release. (KM)

Dan the Automator • *Wanna Buy a Monkey?* • Sequence Records • I would expect Dan the Automator to include tracks by Black Rob, X-ecutioners and Bobby Digital in his new mix CD, but Air, the Doves and Tortoise? Believe it or not, the tracks blend together very well, showcasing Mr. Automator's record collection and mixing abilities. He also plugs his own projects with tracks from Gorillaz, Deltron 3030 and Lovage. (AL)

Deckwrecka • *A Better Tomorrow?* • Ronin Records • This D.J. and beat maker (Agzilla - The Deckwrecka) is known for his "heavy beats, earthquake bass and sharp cuts" but this release also finds the guest spots being plugged with a little R&B as well. Deckwrecka's far out style of beats and turntables are accompanied by a load of label mates from the U.K. who spit verses such as Jimmy Lyons, Rodney P, MCD, Silent-Eclipse, 2ice, Vee and Aishe. (JC)

Deckwrecka • *Vibekiller 12"* • Ronin Records • This single contains two tracks not included on the Deckwrecka full-length album. "A Better Tomorrow? (The 2085 Mix)" is a tale about people of the world taking advantage of and not taking care of our earth, it is also the mic debut for the Deckwrecka. The real story lies within "The Big Picture" which is a 14-minute massacre of hip-hop, funk, horror, September 11th and politics. (JC)

Division • *Who Died/A Working Title* • Sinister Label • Comparing this debut release from Chicago's Division to Jimmy Eat World would not be too far off base. Very likable from the first listen since it doesn't follow formula's like some bands do, but instead changes things up and they keep it interesting. It's got some nice punch in it. (KM)

Do Make Say Think • *Yet & Yet* • Constellation Records • In *Yet & Yet*, their third release, Do Make Say Think show their flair for composing instrumental rock with one foot in pop and the other in experimentation. The songs change tempos without you noticing, from catchy mid-tempo to almost ambient-like drone. (AL)

El Guapo • *Super/System* • Dischord Records • Since 1996, El Guapo has changed their lineup, their instruments and their style a few times, but always with an ear toward pushing musical boundaries through experimentation. On *Super/System*, you will be entertained by their pop leanings and challenged by their improvisations. Their sound can only be described as avant-garde. (AL)

El-P • *Fantastic Damage* • Definitive Jux • After laying down beats for the likes of Aesop Rock and the entire Cannibal Ox album, El-P has returned with his futuristic, dark and gritty beats to shine on his own. The microphone gets passed around a lot on this disc as El-P and label mates help add depth to wicked turntable techniques and a pounding sound. A shot is taken at Rawkus (former label of Company Flow) on "Deep Space 9mm" and "Stepfather Factory" stands out, but the whole thing flows well and sounds like preparation for what is yet to come from this originator. (JC)

Engine Down • *Demure* • Lovitt Records • After recording two well received albums and gaining fans all over, what's a band to do? Change their sound, that's what. Hey, it worked for Radiohead. Vocal harmonies or call and response shouts are out. Repetitive, droning guitars are in. Bad thing? Not at all, since their energy is still there, just redirected. (AL)

Face To Face • *How to Ruin Everything* • Vagrant • It's must be amazing to be in a band like Face To Face, to be around for as long as they have been around, and to still be out there making music that is relevant. This latest release only adds to the impressive Face To Face catalog and will find listeners with their die-hard fans as well as the uninitiated. (KM)

Face To Face vs. Dropkick Murphys • *Split EP* • Vagrant Records • Face To Face and Dropkick Murphys contribute three tracks each of anti-war fervor. Face To Face goes first, with an original called "Fight or Flight," followed by two covers, "Road of the Righteous" by Dropkick Murphys and "Wasted Life," by Stiff Little Fingers. Then Dropkick Murphys take over, with an original called "The Dirty Glass" followed by a cover of CCR's "Fortunate Son" and Press's "21 Guitar Salute." (AL)

Fiver • *Here It Comes* • Devil In The Woods Records • Fiver's third release, *Here It Comes*, is full of atmospheric and dreamy vocals, putting it in the same category as the American Analog Set and the Applesseed Cast's *Low Level Owl* series, but without the instrumentals. Waves of keyboards and reverbed guitars will lull you into a hypnotic state you won't want to get out of. (AL)

Flogging Molly • *Drunken Lullabies* • Side One Dummy Records • Flogging Molly owe their careers to alcohol. After all, their music is perfect for downing Guinness at the local pub. Their punk attitude adds an edge to their riotous Irish-folk tales. The line up includes violin, flute, accordion and mandolin, for that traditional Irish sound, but also includes a bit of distorted guitar. Pick up that glass and toast to Flogging Molly! (AL)

Fly Pan Am • *Ceux Qui Inventent N'ont Jamais Vecu (?)* • Constellation Records • After playing hypnotic, repetitive post rock for a couple of years, Fly Pan Am have switched gears and are now concentrating on more rhythmic song structures. Centered around instrumental rock / funk, they sabotage their own songs with digital feedback and other "mistakes" to keep the listener paying attention. (AL)

GABBA • *Leave Stockholm* • Stigma Records • Not since Dread Zeppelin's playing Led Zeppelin songs with a reggae beat and an Elvis impersonator for a singer have I heard such an unusual pairing of musical influences. GABBA are huge fans of ABBA and the Ramones. Thus, all the songs have the Ramones

style of catchy, fast pop, while a guy and a girl tag team the lyrics to "Waterloo" and "SOS," among other gems. Truly funny, it should kill at your next party. (AL)

Glen Closer • *Pine View Grocery* • Boxing Clever Records • This trio from New Jersey debuts with an 11-track album of pop rock. It's your standard melodic rock album without much in the way of frills or experimentation. The female vocals stand out on this record, but she isn't the exclusive singer. (Not that the guy is bad, I just like her vocals more.) I could imagine this on a light rock or mainstream rock (not hard rock, mind you) station. This isn't earth-shattering or incredibly impressive, but it's a solid release for what it is. (CM)

Harry Manx • *Wise And Otherwise* • NorthernBlues Music • A melodic journey through battered love, poverty, loss, living and dying - all to reach a moment of bliss and innocence. This one-man band delivers a bluesy folk sound accompanied by his raw vocals (Dylan-like). Manx plays harmonica, banjo, guitar and the Mohan Veena (a 12-string Indian slide guitar) and covers songs by Van Morrison, Jimi Hendrix and B.B. King while managing to make them all his own. Musically this album flows well, showcasing lyrics like "you can listen without words, it's not everyone can see/But I recognize your eyes, yeah they once belonged to me..." (JC)

Homesick For Space • *Self-Titled* • Immigrant Sun • Dark and moody, this record sounds a lot like what a band with a great name like Homesick For Space should sound like. Sort the sounds of lost souls playing their way out of uncomfortable feelings, making it all sound beautiful and lost all at the same time. A little like Dead Red Sea or Mogwai but not always as quiet. For only being 5 songs long there is an epic feel to this recording. (KM)

Hot Rod Circuit • *Sorry About Tomorrow* • Vagrant • It's a spring day, you want to open the windows. You have stuff to do, but you don't mind too much, you just want to feel good today. You put in the new Hot Rod Circuit and you start to feel it, and your feeling good about even the shitty things in your life right now and when you pass the sofa you do your best Van Halen jumping guitar solo. That's when you realize that this new Hot Rod Circuit is really catchy and pretty damn good. (KM)

Imperial Teen • *On* • Merge Records • Get ready for some sweet pop sounds. Imperial Teen give you that and more in their latest, *On*. There are plenty of boy/girl harmonies, catchy hooks and playful piano lines. Pay close attention to the lyrics, though, and you'll see that all is not made of sugar. (AL)

Jel • *10 Seconds* • Mush Records • Armed with an SP-1200, Jel takes on instrumental hip hop to the next level. The album is named after the 1200's 10 seconds of sample time. With plenty of samples, he constructs medium tempo hip hop tracks that are complex in their layering. (AL)

John Trudell • *Bone Days* • Asitis Productions • This poet and speaker lays down his beliefs and views within this very mellow spoken word project over Native American tribal chants and music. The poetry is excellent and touches of folk and guitar sounds are added to accent and punctuate the meanings within. Although the words contain good content, at times they feel uncomfortable blending with the accompanied music, causing the project not to blend as well. Words deserve to stand out more, they don't have that feeling of flowing naturally over the variety of instruments, but there is a lot to dissect here. (JC)

Joseph Malik • *Diverse* • Compost Records • *Diverse* is a rather appropriate name for this album. Stripped down ballads, Brazil influenced rhythms, and some trip hop all coexist on this album. Acoustic guitars are everywhere, and I don't mean samples. Then there's Malik's unique vocal style, whose verses tend to be short, dispersed and at times repetitive. (AL)

Julie Dorian • *Heart and Crime* • Jagjaguwar • Dorian's last album, *Julie Dorian and the Wooden Stars*, won the Canadian Juno entertainment award for 2000. This album, a follow-up to her French-sung *Désormais* album, is soft, gentle music with

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

minimal arrangements that allow her earthy voice to take center stage. It is naked vocalization with a tone of intimacy is "like that which comes after three bottles of wine." It's an unafraid, *real* expression of longing, sadness, and hope. (DP)

KaitO • Montigola Underground • Devil in the Woods Records • KaitO likes their pop music, but not too much. They purposefully avoid making their music too sugary sweet by making the vocals a bit distorted at times, harmonic at others. Some electronics are added for flavor, as well as poorly recorded guitar jingle-jangles. Call it noise-pop. (AL)

Ken Cormier • Radio-Bueno • Elis Eil Records • The included press materials describe this as "radio-friendly pop songs." That's true. Combined with the album title you can tell where this is heading. It's not bad at all. Most of it is radio-ready pop singer-songwriter stuff. It's kinda quirky, a little like Bare Naked Ladies or even They Might Be Giants. Then a few tracks step out and get a little more experimental and reminiscent a bit of Cake. Like I said, not bad at all. (CM)

Kevin Devine • Circle Gets The Square • Immigrant Sun • Fucking brilliant should pretty much cover it. There is vulnerability in acoustic music, something naked that puts you close to the music. Devine embraces this tender spot, and uses it to bring the listener into the fold. The themes are common, but written originally enough that you aren't just hearing another guy on a guitar with a broken heart. Devine is the front man of NY's The Miracle of 86 when he's not soothing lost souls with his acoustic guitar. (KM)

Knievel • The Name Rings a Bell That Drowns Out Your Voice • In Music We Trust • As fate would have it, I stumbled across an Evel Knievel "E! True Hollywood Story" shortly after listening to Knievel's CD for the first time. Man, that was one crazy, drunken, womanizing bastard. I'm surprised he hasn't sued this Australian trio for copyright infringement, challenged them to a bus jumping competition or something equally crazy. This band is the wild and aggressive Knievel's antithesis. They write gorgeous indie pop songs in the Death Cab for Cutie mold, sad and sweet with hooks that should come with warning labels. This is one of the best albums I've heard so far this year. Now, think of the promotional opportunities: did someone say jump the Snake River Canyon? (CL)

Landscape • Positive Punk Power • Scene Police • Can you fault the energy, even if it misses a little bit? Landscape's sound takes you back to the hey-days of hardcore and bands like Gorilla Biscuits or Instead. Their ideas are great and important, they have a great booklet with tons of great info and powerful messages of eco-anarchism and human rights. Yeah it's all great stuff, well except for the whole music part, that part isn't so good sadly. (KM)

Leeche • Vermin • self-released • Maybe grunge is still a viable sound. These guys dish out some very Nirvana-esque tunes and they aren't too bad. If you were, or remain, a fan of grunge, I'd definitely recommend checking this out. Maybe Kurt Cobain isn't dead. (CM)

Lesser Birds of Paradise • It Isn't the Fall • Loose Thread Recordings • It's been two years since the Lesser Birds of Paradise released their debut album, *A Suitable Frame*. Now, instead of an ever-revolving cast of musicians, they have settled down as a four piece. The music moved away from their organic sound, opting instead for an indie pop sound augmented with organ, stylophone, theremin and vibes. (AL)

Manish Kalvakota with Charles Douglas • Outer Limits • Voltage Recordings • Voltage Recording artist Manish Kalvakota and Charles Douglas of No. 6 Records bring their songwriting talents together for *Outer Limits*. The eleven songs are reminiscent of Dean Wareham's work with Galaxie 500 and Luna. The reverb drenched guitars and softly sung vocals float along over gentle percussion work. Fans of Velvet Underground inspired rock will enjoy this album. (CL)

Milford • This Time its Personal • Right-Left Records • Florida's Milford follows up their debut EP with this rock filled full length. Steering aptly away from definable genre labels, combining a bit of punk, emo, indie, and hard rock without sounding like anyone too much or a blundered mix of them combined. Lyrically amazing at times and musically potent the foundation is set for these guys to make some noise. (KM)

Minmae • My Quiet Life • Blackbean and Placenta Records • For his third CD as Minmae, Sean Brooks compiled some new versions of old songs, vinyl or compilation only releases, some collaborations between himself and Jake Anderson and a few new songs. The resulting recording is all over the place, with styles ranging from pop to drone. (AL)

Modey Lemon • self-titled • A-F Records • Garage blues is an unfamiliar style to me. This has a '70s fuzzed-out rock feel that fuses with a late '70s punk aggression. It sounds a little like The Doors meets New York Dolls meets Danzig. Two guys, 13 tracks and plenty of rock to go with the roll. (CM)

Mörser • 10,000 Bad Guys Dead • Chrome Saint Magnus Records • This band has three singers, two bassists, a guitarist and a drummer, and it shows. Their music insane and hard to categorize, but they encompass every genre related to metal. In one word: brutal. Death metal and hardcore are especially visible, and their intensity cannot be matched. (AL)

Nate Denver's Neck • Prepare to Die • King Crab Records • This is the epitome of home recordings, not necessarily because of sound quality, but because you get the feeling that it was kind of thrown together. Nate Denver does everything on this record, from playing the guitar, to singing, to programming the electronic effects. Folk music gets thrown together with electronica and a bit of death metal attitude on *Prepare to Die*. (AL)

Need New Body • self-titled • File-13 Records • Strictly for experimental / art rock fans, the music of Need New Body seldom comes close to traditional song structure. Think of a whacked out Critters Buggin'. Free jazz improvisations and sounds made with traditional instruments like sax and keys, as well as non-instruments like pots and pans is the modus operandi here. (AL)

Nina Nastasia • The Blackened Air • Touch and Go Records • Both beautiful and melancholic, the music of Nina Nastasia will get you through the toughest of times with her sweet, nonchalant voice. Guitars, accordion, cello, mandolin and violin whisper in your ear in this slow, minimalist album. (AL)

Otis Taylor • Respect the Dead • Northern Blues Music • Hailing from Chicago but residing in Boulder, Colorado, Otis Taylor is an accomplished blues artist and his music definitely speaks to the listener. The songs have a folksy feel to them, very earthy with Native American influences. Lyrically, the songs tell stories, a number of which deal with African-American issues and are very strong, socially aware tunes. (CM)

Pinq • Quiet Games For Hot Weather • Major7 • Pinq is a San Francisco foursome that plays deep, full cuts that begin with soft tones, and slowly crescendo into powerful, desperate rock firepower. There's heavy influence of great post-punk, emo, and post-pop bands here. Their layering of instrumentation is impressive, and the falsetto vocals are an excellent choice for this very dark-

themed display of music that drips with emotion. (DP)

Poison The Well • Tear From The Red • Trustkill • There is a buzz about Poison the Well, people who you'd never hear talk of hardcore from are saying this band is the next big thing. This release is strangely teetering the edge of radio-friendly and true underground hardcore, and instead of creating a good listenable classic hardcore album, it sounds more like a good hardcore band trying to sound radio-friendly. It's a good record, just disappointing knowing what these guys can do, you really just wanted to see them take it to a whole other level. (KM)

Pooch • Individual • Medea Records • Touching on individuality, repressed anger and fake friends through rhymes. This rap metal band out of Michigan has the sound of 311 with the lyrics of SÜdical Tendencies with a bit of electronic flavor. Intensity is at a high level as the band angrily jams out, but vocals could have been better, they sound stale at times. (JC)

Potshot • A-GoGo • Asian Man Records • This ska/punk album is carried by a mean bass guitar sound and a horn section that just wont quit, a very impressive album. This band hails from Tokyo, Japan and the album moves like a Rolla coaster – one second climbing the hill, then the next letting it all hang out. Very fluent, good stuff. (JC)

Prevent Falls • A Newer More Shattered You • Equal Vision • I can't help but think of 90's Equal Vision band Shift when I hear this band. They have that same post-hardcore Quicksand sound that doesn't quite fit emo, indie or punk. This garden state outfit luckily isn't content to be worthy of such comparisons, but luckily moves things along and takes the sound where it needs to go next. Disappointingly they get repetitive sometimes. (KM)

Project 208 • Love Songs for the Dying Machine • Confined Records • Yes, yes these guys got it so right. Screamy hardcore that goes straight for the heart. In the vein of Thursday and Grade, Project 208 has a hardcore and emo sound that keeps the pace of things to come. Lyrics that are both personal and political relating the two and making the screams that much more important. (KM)

Quitter • self-titled • Tortuga Recordings • Blending a whole bunch of quasi-genres, we find Quitter becoming one of those bands that we would expect to hear on our local hard rock radio station. They sound like the bastard child of Black Sabbath and Jon Bon Jovi. Pop rock hooks and fairly standard song structures will make Quitter a band you will be hearing more of - like it or not. (MK)

Radio 4 • Gotham! • Gern Blandsten Records • Hardcore dance music is back. Think The Clash meets Joy Division meets the Stones. I'm sure some will compare them to The Faint, mostly because of the new wave similarities. But Radio 4 is more rock-oriented and less newwave. The creative, electronic elements are there, but they're subtler than The Faint. This is really great

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stuff, sure to impress a wide range of tastes. (CM)

Radio Holiday • *Self-titled* • **Conquer The World** • Detroit's Radio Holiday sure did try to avoid sounding stale. Straightforward and subtle at the same time. Sounding like a little like Samiam or Seaweed with the sort of bigger than life sound that fills a room so well. Radio Holiday keeps it simple with good catchy choruses and singable lyrics. Yeah, this one comes highly recommended. (KM)

Rancid / NOFX • **BYO Split Series Vol. III** • **BYO Records** • This is the third installment in BYO Records' split CD series, with NOFX and Rancid sharing the CD. The twist here, though, is that each band recorded six of the other band's songs. The result of this experiment is as interesting as its concept. (AL)

Randomvariate • *Olio* • **Wrought Records** • Four CD's and one "compendium" CD, booklets for each CD with full explanations of the songs, 10 years in the making. Do these people think they are the Beatles or something? I don't think in my entire life I have ever seen or heard something more self-absorbed and self-gratifying. You'd think that when you release a 4 CD set as your debut that it might even be good, and its hardly listenable sounding too much like Ozzy Osborne with an acoustic guitar. Maybe in their native Nebraska this sort of self-indulgent snotty thing is respected, but then that's Nebraska. (KM)

Req • *Sketchbook* • **Warp Records** • If you like your beats slow and slightly twisted, check out Req's latest, *Sketchbook*. Waves of sounds drift in and out, over beats that sound dirty, even muffled at times. There is an unusual feeling on this CD, or else Warp wouldn't be carrying it. Think of them as distant cousins of labelmates Plaid. (AL)

Reverend Horton Heat • *Lucky 7* • **Artemis Records** • For over a decade, the Reverend Horton Heat has been terrorizing music fans with his trio's brand of country-fied psychobilly. Lucky 7 sees a change in labels, but no change in musical direction. Why change a perfect formula consisting of cars, women, drugs and alcohol? (AL)

Richard Youngs • *May* • **Jagjaguwar** • This six-song mesmerizing, anguish-analyzing project is a somber testament of a man alone searching for the unknown. "Neon Winter" begins this cold journey with a man, his voice and neglected, tearful guitar strings. The acoustic/folk sounds of this singer/songwriter from England are a kind of "meditation" caught up in his defenseless "drone-like" voice. Think of being alone somewhere, strumming guitar strings and finding the highest note you can find. (JC)

S.H.Ar.Q. • *Future Artifact* • **S.H.Ar.Q.** • The acronym means "Secure Hash Algorithm Quartet," and the music ranges from straight rock and roll to some really incredible experimental shit. The lyrics are nothing short of brilliant, offering poetic indictments of our twisted culture. The tunes employ instrumenta-

tion such as the cello and mandolin, and really creepy vocal effects to make the experimental truly that. It's head-bobbin', intelligent rock with an opinion. (DP)

Sadie • *No One's Pretty* • **self-released** • This poppy 3-song EP has great harmonic and melodic flow, and great vocal lines that set it apart. Their mantra is, "We believe it is the blisters that make you beautiful. Give us Aphrodite before her shower, Apollo in the dark, that sort of thing." Themes of tearing down the glittery facades of glamour, the falseness, the walking lie that so many are forced to be. They are rebels in the truest sense, not the false traditional sense. (Note: Sadie recently changed their name to The Alps.) (DP)

Sarah Shannon • *Sarah Shannon* • **Casa Recording Co.** • You remember Velocity Girl, don't you? Sarah Shannon used to sing for 'em, but this ain't no jangly indie pop record. Shannon delivers ten songs all over the pop spectrum that provide a showcase for her outstanding voice. Several of the songs feature strong horn arrangements; you'd think Burt Bacharach was responsible for some of these songs. Actually, it's producer Blake Wescott, not Bacharach, who collaborates with Shannon on much of the material. This is a definite change of pace from Velocity Girl's sound, revealing a new range and maturity for Shannon. (CL)

Satovan • *Shhhh... It's Satovan* • **self-released** • Okay. I'll admit it. I thought that they were a joke when I first saw the album cover and the ridiculous band pictures that they included in their promo stuff. Now, I'll also admit that Satovan is a damn cool band. Hard rock that rocks. Catchy and melodic without selling out and sounding like every other band. (MK)

Seafood • *When Do We Start Fighting* • **Network America** • This London based indie rock band begins with a catchy, confident sound early on with tracks like "Splinter" and "Western Battle." The disc is mostly a free flowing ride up and down the adrenaline meter while showcasing their crisp, subtle, and at times melodic sound, which was recorded under claustrophobic circumstances in New York. This is both an energetic and out of breathe release best described as having a "sensitive side, an intelligent edge and utterly cracking tunes." A complete rock album. (JC)

Sectorseven • *Dual* • **Sonic Unyon** • This punk outfit from Canada plays it fast and loud. Sadly its nothing you haven't heard before, and it doesn't even really hold up the status quo. This is a re-release of older releases, and that's kinda what it sounds like, I'd imagine these guys have moved past these recordings and unless you love them, there is no reason for anybody else to take this walk down memory lane. (KM)

Sense Field • *Tonight and Forever* • **Network America** • I can't imagine a band that has had a more difficult go of things than Sense Field, signed and then shunned by their major label, unable to release their last recording because of contract obli-

gations, and a host of other hurdles. Life hasn't been easy for SF that's for sure, but hell if you would never know it from listening to their music. Inspiring, positive, and even enlightening songs remind you that SF is something special. The years have made them better than ever, and this release a long time in the making is proof of that. (KM)

Slackjaw • *Darkest Hour* • **No Karma Recordings** • Now officially a trio, Slackjaw carry on, laying down nine tracks of amazing indie rock. Eric Schopmeyer has a voice that is both beautiful and ragged, completely emotional. Musically, they weave through Cure and Radiohead territory, without staying in any one for too long. (AL)

Small Engine Metropolis • *The Cynic* • **Immigrant Sun** • A strange combination of triumphant guitar riffs, pounding drums and gruff vocals that come together more or less. I guess the sound is emo, but like that tag and every band that it seems to try and fit, it doesn't really tell you much. Maybe cleaned up punk might fit a little better. Regardless of the title, this release has some great songs and some bright moments. (KM)

Solomon • *Down In Front* • **self-released** • Combining elements of folk and blues, Solomon offers up 11 tracks of guitar jangling tunēs. The bluesy aspects add a groove to the music while the folk guitar-work twinkles along in the most pleasant of ways, layered upon each other. The vocals sit right on top of the music, marching each song forward with a wise and precise delivery of story after story. (CM)

Speedbuggy USA • *Round Up* • **Cargo Music** • Speedbuggy USA's penchant for roots rock and country is ever present in their EP, *Round Up*, tipping their hat to influences like Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard with two cover songs. Like with any country album, *Round Up* deals with pain and misery, yet are catchy as hell. This would do well in a dusty bar's old jukebox. (AL)

Stretching FM • *What if I Stopped Breathing* • **Second Chance** • I had seen these guys live a few times and never really taken away any kind of impression, which is all the more shocking that I really loved this CD. 5 tracks that make you wonder where number 6 is. Stretching FM's sound is very rock complete with guitar solos and a big arena-rock sound at times. This Florida band is ready to take that next step if this recording is any indication. (KM)

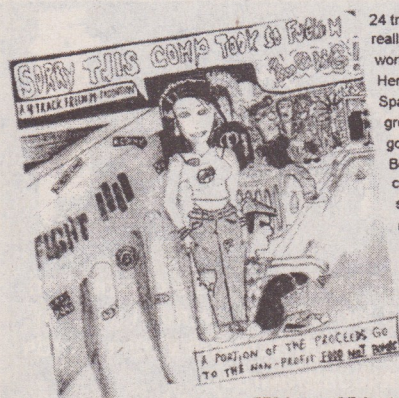
Strung Out • *An American Paradox* • **Fat Wreck Chords** • After four years without an album, Strung Out went into the studio and recorded *An American Paradox*, a blistering album of melodic punk. Fast as always, they blend heavy metal influences into their guitars while their harmonies soar. In particular, check out "Razor Sex," which injects a bit of hardcore into the mix. Bad Religion fans should eat this up. (AL)

SushiRobo • *Drawings and Garbage Structures* • **Pattern 25 Records** • Former Posies bassist Rick Roberts traded in his bass for a guitar and a microphone to front SushiRobo. However, his influence as a bassist is quite evident, since the songs on this, their second release, are quite heavy on the groovy elements. Some electronic effects and other noises are injected into these poppy, indie rock tunes. (AL)

The 'Tone • *Here's Another Reason to Believe In Rock 'n' Roll* • **No Idea** • Brit rockers The 'Tone are back and this release is their most ambitious and musically mature to date. I'm sure everybody says this, and they are sick of hearing it, but they sound so much like The Clash. It has all the elements that made The Clash so good, the punk mixed with the dub-reggae, the grit and attitude. Don't get me wrong, these guys are more than amped up cover band, their songs are theirs and their sound belongs in the here and now. (KM)

The Bad Luck 13 Riot Extravaganza • *With Friends Like These, Who Needs Enemies* • **Resurrection A.D. Records** • From looking at the press photo, these guys (and girl) look like a cross between Gwar and Slipknot. Covered in blood and all wearing masks, they look as menacing as they sound. Metal crossed with hardcore with the force of a bat to the face. The music is good enough to outlive the costumes, which is hardly an original concept. (AL)

The Cable Car Theory • *The Deconstruction* • **Immigrant Sun** • Vocally powerful emo-melodic hardcore with more passion than a high school romance. The Cable Car Theory bring their "A" game with this release. Beautiful artwork and a creative layout



24 tracks of great music from all over the U.S. I really enjoyed putting this thing together and working with bands like Dirt Bike Annie, Snap Her, Nobody Cares, Anti-Anti, Dead End Kids, Sparechange00, and others who are really great musicians. 50 cents from each one sold goes to the Miami chapter of the Food Not Bombs non-profit organization. First 100 come in neon green or orange jewel cases, so if you want those, order now, they are running out. For full track listing and other info on the label, check out the web site!

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only make this release only better. This band is a perfect complement to the creative landscape of the New York City music scene. (KM)

The Capitol City Dusters • Rock Creek • Dischord Records • For solid indie rock with a punch, look no further than the Capitol City Dusters. Sometimes melodic and sometimes not, these guys from Washington rip through 41 minutes without looking back. The bass lines jump out and the guitars are just fuzzy enough. (AL)

The Cricket Rumor Mill • Renderings • Loose Thread Recordings • Renderings is a collection from their previous two EPs, a self-titled one and *Molto*. Songs like CD opener "Frisbee" have a shiny quality to them, saying more with instruments than any singer could ever put into words. There's just the right amount of reverb without turning the album into space rock, but creating a nice atmosphere for you to get lost in. (AL)

The Frustrators • Achtung Jackass • Adeline Records • If you like pop-punk like Green Day you will like these guys (plus Mike Dimt from Green Day is in the band). They are slightly better than most of the punk drivel that I am forced to listen to. The songs are fun and they don't sound like every other band you've ever heard. It is a nice change. This is a band worth seeking out and hearing. (MK)

The Gadgets • Today is My Day • Thick Records • From listening to *Today is My Day*, you'd never guess that the lead singer and songwriter was born in 1977. You see, their sound has progressed from third wave ska to a blues influenced, roots-rock sound, similar to the Delta 72 or the Forty Fives. (AL)

The Gloria Record • Start Here • Arena Rock Recording Co. • The newband featuring members from emo icons, Mineral. Just as Mineral came along and changed the world around, The Gloria Record seems to be trying to do the same. I am not sure if their results will be as drastic, it won't be for a lack of trying. This recording is rich and deeply threaded with a sound that will move some parts of you that you never swore moved. They do have a little bit of this U2 thing going on, think good old U2, not cheeseball U2. (KM)

The Herbaliser • Something Wicked This Way Comes • Ninja Tune Records • The Herbaliser is back with a fresh combination of samples, beats and rhymes. Jake Wherry and Ollie Teeba rounded up the lyrical talents of Seaming To, Iriscience, Blade, Wildflower, Phi Life Cypher and MF Doom. The instrumental tracks conjure up images of 1970's funk, while keeping in touch with the present and hinting at the future. (AL)

The Kickovers • Osaka • Fenway Recordings • This is 13-tracks of power pop with huge melodies and enough hooks to a fish farm shake with fear. The Kickovers features Nate Albert, the former guitarist for the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. This project of his is nothing like MMB. The songs are more along the lines of Material Issue, Weezer and Pinehurst Kids. It's a strong rock and roll album with a good pop sense and addictive track after track. (CM)

The Lab Rats • Start Thinking • New Disorder Records • Okay. I'm going to say that the oldest person in the band is 17. Bearing that in mind, this disc is pretty decent. Loud, fast hardcore with everything you would want or expect in a hardcore disc. Lots of screaming from the singer got on my nerves after a very short time, however. (MK)

The Marginal Prophets • Dead Hippie Bootleg • self-released • Somebody say "Ho!" Somebody say "Ho! Ho!" Damn, this CD really gets me in the mood to put my arms in the air. And wave 'em like I just don't care. The Marginal Prophets are a self-described hip-hop/garage band and that hits the nail on the head. Combining garage rock elements with hip-hop, this five-part crew (two vocalists, bass, drum and guitar) avoids the lame world of metal-rap and instead shifts the gears into funk. This may be tough to follow but imagine a blend of Beastie Boys, Sublime, P-Funk, and Run-DMC. This album will definitely get

the party started. And, yes, quickly. (CM)

The Maroons • You're Gonna Ruin Everything • In Music We Trust • So, how famous do you have to be to be considered a supergroup? Guitarist/vocalist John Moen and keyboard player Mike Clark both have day jobs with the Jicks, the backing band for former Pavement big cheese Stephen Malkmus. Guitarist Jim Talstra has played with Minus 5 and bassist John Cox is a member of Satan's Pilgrims. Impressive indie rock pedigrees aside, the Maroons play some damn good pop music. Their smart, catchy tunes are reminiscent of bands like the Fountains of Wayne, less the high geek factor. (CL)

The Miracle of 86 • Kevin Kolankowski • Immigrant Sun • This is their 2nd release and the follow up to their highly acclaimed debut. It's good, but it lacks some of the power that the debut has. It's more of an unplugged album, and has a strange coffeehouse kind of sound. With that in mind, all the elements that make MO86 good are still there, great song writing and heartfelt emotions on their sleeve. This is a good compliment to their other release, but buy that one first. (KM)

The Mooney Suzuki • Electric Sweat • Gammon Records • Get ready to *rawk* with the Mooney Suzuki's soul drenched rock and roll. They borrow from the Stooges, the MC5 and 1960's British R & B, busting out ten songs in about 35 minutes. If you are not dead tired from dancing after listening to Electric Sweat, then there is something seriously wrong with you. (AL)

The New Amsterdams • Para Toda Vida • Vagrant Records/Heroes & Villains • Para Toda Vida is the second release for Get Up Kid Matthew Pryor's side project, the New Amsterdams. Now, kids don't go expecting the energetic, emo stylings of the Get Up Kids; the New Amsterdams let off the gas pedal with mellow, stripped down tunes and simple arrangements. But at the core is still Pryor's expressive songwriting style. Like the Pinehurst Kids' Joe Davis' solo work, the New Amsterdams showcase the raw power and talent of one of emo's most popular performers. (CL)

The Remedy Session • Self-titled • Self-Released • Three very average emo songs from this South Florida band. There is some potential there, but I don't think these songs capture that. A few years from now this release will either be a document of where this band was at one point, or just another demo of just another band that broke up before they ever really did anything. There is enough good in this demo for me to hope for the first one. (KM)

The Secession Movement • Academic • Keep Safe Records • Appropriately self-described as having an "acrobatic" sound, The Secession Movement offers up nine new tracks. Their sound is, at times, a kin to Dismemberment Plan while other times similar to Sonic Youth. It's an aural journey that is full of intense energy and experimental sounds. Through and through, it's indie rock, but far from run of the mill and definitely unique. (CM)

The World/Inferno Friendship Society • Just the Best Party • Gern Blandsten Records • The World/Inferno Friendship is back with 12 new tracks that are equal parts Broadway theatre, circus tent performance and punk attitude. These nine guys and gals will appeal to fans of the Squirrel Nut Zippers and the Billy Nayer Show. (AL)

Thee Insekt • Days of Thunder • B9000 Records • Days of Thunder marks the first solo outing by DJ Grazzhoppa, proving he

can make it on his own. His scratching is amazingly fast, and his samples are from all over the place, foreign movies, old funk records, you name it. (AL)

Trapdoor Fucking Exit • Self-titled • No Idea • Oh hell yeah! Kinda of an artsy Born Against sound that just rocks you to death pretty much from the get go. Trapdoor Fucking Exit's sound comes off as sincere, real and heartfelt while not sounding too pretentious or self-absorbed. More great hardcore from the socialist paradise of Sweden, and hell they have a great name too. (KM)

Trial By Fire • Ringing In The Dawn • Jade Tree • Trial By Fire are the perfect blend of what is now and what was then, the bridge between '80s era hardcore like Minor Threat and this era's Strike Anywhere or Avail. Hailing from Washington DC might help that comparison. Punk hardcore that seems to know exactly where it wants to go, exactly what it wants to do, and you are taken in and feeling it all. (KM)

Tungsten 74 • Await Further Instructions • Technical Echo • To be instrumental, you have to be interesting. Tungsten 74 keep it interesting and then some. Kind of an ambient space indie-rock thing going on, kinda like Mogwai, but not as boring. When you hear that it's mostly recorded live, and some of it improvised you start to realize there is a whole lot of music genius going on. (KM)

Ultimate Fakebook • Open Up And Say Awesome • Initial • Imagine if you will a combo of a tough Weezer and The Replacements. OK, that's a start to figuring out Ultimate Fakebook. Poppy without being being wimpy, catchy without being boring, sentimental without being sappy. Good diverse song writing creates a great CD full of rock. A constant grueling tour schedule has made this group really come together and this release is their best to date. (KM)

Uptown Sinclair • Uptown Sinclair • D-text Records • Highly praised in the Cleveland region, these four guys push power pop rock with melodic, catchy hooks and harmonies. There harmless sound puts the fun back into rock. There is not a bad song here; any track is ready for the radio. (JC)

Ursula 1000 • Kinda' Kinky • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music • If you enjoyed Alex Gimenos' previous effort as Ursula 1000, *The Now Sound*, you'll definitely love *Kinda' Kinky*. His love of lounge music and all things kitsch gets a kick in the ass with danceable Latin infused beats and funky effects. (AL)

Various Artists • Beast Of British • High Speed Recordings • This 20-track compilation from the U.K. is packed with punk, ska, old skool and hardcore rock. Featured are the likes of Varukers, Southport, UK Subs, King Prawn, Vanilla Pod and Capdown. This disc has enough of a variety within the same ballpark to wet the appetite and then some. (JC)

Various Artists • Compilation 2001 • Fastmusic • With bands

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like the Circle Jerks, Travoltas, The Fairlanes and Slab, you can be damn sure that you are in for a 26-song audio feast here. This is a good disc with a lot of your favorite punkers. There are also a lot of bands you've never heard of whom you will wish to know better. Get this disc. (MK)

Various Artists • Down In Front • No Idea • The music on this 21-track compilation spans more than 10 years. It features an amazing blend of punk tunes from such bands as Astrid Oto, Sweet Baby, Pinhead Gunpowder and The Blank Fight. But what really makes this comp great is that it's all about Aaron Cometbus (ex-Crimpshrine); he plays a part on every track. It comes with a sweet 12-page booklet with signature Cometbus handwriting. (CM)

Various Artists • Happy Meals Vol. 3: Songs to Run Away From • My Records • On the contrary, these are songs to run to. Many of the songs here are previously unreleased, including Bright Life, Adventures of Jet, Goleta, Smile, Armchair Martian and a cool Dylan cover by Me First and the Gimme Gimmes. Styles range from pop and punk, to alt-country and acoustic. (AL)

Various Artists • Me Against The World: The Emo Diaries, Chapter Seven • Deep Elm • And the story goes on. With Chapter Seven, Deep Elm offers up twelve new tracks in their quest to introduce listeners to lesser-known emo bands. The styles span the range of mellow to hardcore and hail from the Netherlands to New Mexico. Standout artists on this release include the hard-rocking, guitar-weaving Dorian and the hyper-catchy, melodic rock of The Killing Suspense. (CM)

Various Artists • New York's Hardest 3 • Go Kart Records • Twelve bands contribute two unreleased songs each, for 24 tracks of ear-splitting, hardcore. Included are Agnostic Front, S.O.D., Ill Niño, Demonspeed and Inhuman, just to name a few. If the first two volumes failed to anger your neighbors, volume 3 will surely see the police summoned to your home for excessive noise. (AL)

Various Artists • No Categories 5 • Ubiquity Records • No Categories 5 is the perfect combination of sounds the Ubiquity label has to offer. Their mix of styles like broken beat, house music, downtempo, hip hop, Latin and Brazilian beats gives them a unique roster of artists. Play this at your next gathering and keep your guests entertained with the sounds of Interference, Beatless, As One, Jack Costanzo, John Beltran and others. (AL)

Various Artists • Prisons on Fire • AK Press • Compiled lectures, interviews, and archive news reports about George Jackson and The Attica Prison rebellion. Gives you a good look back at an important and mostly forgotten piece of history, mixed well with both old interviews and news reports and newer interviews that have the perspective of the years looking back. A must for anybody interested in human rights, black liberation, and prison reform. (KM)

Various Artists • Redefining Music • No Idea • This is Gainesville record label No Idea's 100th release, over the span of 15 years. I can do the math for you that means that long before Florida was the cool place to be No Idea was pumping out great releases. To celebrate this legacy this release has 16 bands from the No Idea stable doing covers, Hot Water doing The Boss's "No Surrender," Small Brown Bike covering Thin Lizzy's "Jailbreak," I Hate Myself covering my favorite Spoke song, and Radon doing a Morrissey song among other classics. (KM)

Various Artists • Rock Music – A Tribute to Weezer • Deadroid Records • Is there really a need for a Weezer tribute? Personally, I think it is a bit early, since they just came out with their third album, from which no songs are represented here. Thus, seven songs from their debut and four from Pinkerton are covered here, as well as "Jamie" from the Buddy Holly single and "Susanne" from the Mallrats soundtrack. What is impressive is the bands they got to appear on this record: Piebald, Elliott, Dashboard Confessional, The Stereo, and The Ataris are just

a few. (AL)

Various Artists • The Legacy: Episode 1 • Ronin Records • "Touching all countries/hustlin' rap" is what this crew from the U.K. is working towards, this compilation mixed by Skitz and Deckwrecka is a damn good introduction if you haven't heard anything from this label. Thumping, pulsating beats are what carry the album (a couple instrumentals) but the rhyme flow and lyrics have their bright spots as well. Rodney P, Roots Manuva, MCD, Skinnyman and others make appearances; "Whatchu Expect" and "Cordless Mics" stand out. (JC)

Various Artists • The Thing That Ate Floyd • Lookout! Records • If you've been searching for this out of print compilation, you're in luck! Lookout is re-releasing this 1988 double CD, with 34 tracks by Neurosis, Mr. T Experience, Vagrants, No Use for a Name and Steel Pole Bathbats, among others. Also included is Operation Ivy's "Hangin' Out," which was recorded during their initial sessions for *Energy*, but never released. Add to that a 24 page booklet with artwork by the bands, and you've got yourself a collector's item. (AL)

Various Artists • Twelve Step Program feat. Burns Out Bright, Dade County Resistance & Last To Know • Three Day Records • All three of the bands on here are extremely tight. The sound is pretty consistent: melodic, emotional, hard rocking, lots of tempo changes, strong vocals. It's not ground-breaking material, but it's hard not to enjoy – all the songs are pretty catchy. Fans of Starting Line, Digger or Alkaline Trio are sure to dig this. (CM)

Various Artists • You Don't Need Darkness To Do What You Think Is Right • Geographic Records • This album was originally intended to introduce the Geographic label to Japan, but then they decided to release it in the US. If you like slightly unusual pop music, you'll be glad they did. Future Pilot AKA, the Pastels, International Airport, Pedro and Sister Vanilla are just some of the seventeen artists on this highly enjoyable comp. (AL)

Very Metal • Hit and Run • Beer City Records • Fast driving short rock and roll songs. This is the kind of band you want to play really loud when you're cruising down the highway at 95 mph. Nothing fancy, nothing experimental, just straight forward hard-hitting rock. (MK)

Vision • Just Short Of Living • Knife Or Death Records • A release from 1992, this definitely sounds it. Not so much aged, as a period piece. It has all the hallmarks of 90's NYC hardcore, the thick guitar, pounding beats, and desperate vocals that scream nothing but a rare kind of sincerity. Not as famous as some of the others of the same time and scene, Vision still bring a quality sound to your ears. (KM)

Warren Ellis • Three Pieces for Violin • King Crab Records • If this CD reminds you of the Dirty Three, it's because Warren Ellis is one of the dirty ones. For his first solo release, he took his inspiration from the Tango and composed these three songs. They are not Tango songs, but rather an homage to the style, taking elements from it and improvising around them. (AL)

When Sparks Fly • Why Bother Waiting • Confined Records • These Ohio cats really tear it up on this 12-track punk rock album. It's an amazing debut release that capitalizes on great vocals (two different singers), powerful melodies, swirling guitars and great tempo changes. They combine elements of power punk, rock and roll and hardcore, but the overall thick, catchy result is unique and impressive. (CM)

White Collar Crime • Their Laws Are Dimwit Greed • Soft Skull Press • This band uses bass guitar, piano/keyboards and percussion to deliver their displeasure with our country's government on behalf of under-appreciated workers of America. The sound is a cross between punk and jazz, full of radical lyrics focusing on the out of control economy, a corrupt oligarchy government and the followers of mass media. Lead singer Sander Hicks has a vision of a world in which the people have control over the economy on this "to the point" release. (JC)

Whitee • Sapphic Delight • Smegma Records • Not much to get excited about beginning with the opening track "Jesus Just Wants To Dance." Described as "genre-bending" this emcee rhymes about corny stuff over drum machine beats mixed with guitar and electronic flavor. Oh yeah, three tracks are based on trials and tribulations with lesbians. (JC)

Wise and Foolish Builders • Sleight of Hand • self-released • I didn't know Radiohead's Thom York had a side project! Actually, he doesn't. Wise and Foolish Builder Ben Smith just sounds a lot like him. This band is no Radiohead clone, though. Their piano driven pop style is more along the lines of a mel-ancholic Beulah, with pedal steel guitar adding an interesting contrast. (AL)

Wonderlick • Self-titled • Future Farmer • This is a strange CD, the acoustic almost poppy cover of Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart" should have been the first sign. Kinda happy and kinda sad at times, with a sound that sometimes sounds like acoustic techno or something. The thing is it's good, it's likable, you just aren't sure why. Featuring Ex-members of Too Much Joy, some of the lyrical humor and ironic bitterness present in that band is also found here. This one is a scratch your head kind of good. (KM)

Yesterday's New Quintet • Angles Without Edges • Stones Throw • With Madlib (Lootpack, Quasimoto, remixing for everyone and their mother) behind the project, I knew it was going to be nice. But the jazzy flows that filled my ears were still a surprise. YNQ is made up of Amhad Miller on vibes, Malik Flavors on percussion, Joe McDuffrey on keys, Monk Hughes bass, and Otis Jackson Jr. on drums or keyboard. The result is an aggressive style of jazz that is heavy on keyboards, complex orchestration and keepin' your head bobbin'. This is one of the most aurally-satisfying albums I've heard in a while and further proof that there are some new cats in the world of jazz that deserve attention. (CM)

Vinyl releases

Grafton • Child Mulletstation 7" • Diaphragm • This rock and roll has a real swagger to it. It has a garage rock feel to it and a classic metal attitude. It's drenched with sweat and a working-class Ohio punch to the face. The guitar work on side-B is really bad-ass. Two tracks of beer-enriched rock. (CM)

Last Year's Diary • self-titled 7" • Ignition/Scene Police • With a poppy, acoustic jangle, LYD caught me off guard. I was expecting something harder, but I was pleasantly surprised by the sincerity and strong songwriting of all three tracks. Germany's Alex Erich is the man behind the band and his diverse musical background and skills have made LYD into something of its own – a bit emo, a bit blues and a bit punk rock. His music and his words send a message. Pay attention. (CM)

Strike Anywhere • Underground Europe 2001 Genoa Benefit 7" • Scene Police • Pulling out some older material, SA releases this collection of 1999 demo tracks as a benefit for the Lawyers' Committee of Inquiry in Berlin. It was put out shortly after the actions at the G8 summit in Genoa, Italy in July 2001. The political commentary and hardcore intensity are a perfect mesh and SA carries it out better than anyone. Songs featured are "Sunspotting", "Antidote", "Chorus of One", and "Cassandric Equation." (CM)

The Wife Beaters • Child Mulletstation 7" • self-released • I really can't say much good about this four-song release. The vocals are way too gruff and "manly", the recording is really bad and the music is garage-rock mush. The lyrics are equally (if not more) poor, mostly focusing on violence (including violence against women, hence the band's name). Maybe it's all supposed to be a big joke. But I don't get it. (CM)

Yage • self-titled 7" • Level Plane Records • The packaging on this is great (die-cut insert and spot varnish on the cover). But the music is even better. This five-piece hails from Cologne, Germany and have been around for about three years. Their brand of hardcore is infectious. It's incredibly intense but not void of melody while the screaming vocals add an extra level of emotion. The socio/political lyrics and commentary (on the insert) are equally quite impressive. The band reminds me at time of harder Boy Sets Fire or Grade. (CM)

☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Label Addresses

(write these guys, tell 'em IMPACT sent ya)

Adeline Records, 5337 College Ave #318, Oakland, CA 94618
A-F Records, PO Box 71266, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
AK Press, 674A 23rd St, Oakland, CA 94612-1163
All The Dead Pilots, PO Box 508, Hanover, MD 21076
amBiguous CITY! Records, PO Box 31560, Baltimore, MD 21207
Anchor & Hope, c/o Burd Early, 146 Wickham Rd., Garden City, NY 11530
Anticon, c/o 6months Distribution, 5878.5 Doyle St., Emeryville, CA 94608
Artemis Records, 130 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011
Asian Man Records, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
Asitis Productions, Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031
B9000 Records, Burggravenlaan 20, 9000 Gent, Belgium
Barsuk Records, PO Box 22546 Seattle, WA 98122
Beer City Records, Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035
Big Wheel Recreation, 325 Huntington Avenue #24, Boston, MA 02115
Blackbean and Placenta, PO Box 1476, Frazier Park, CA 93225
Boxing Clever Records, 10 New Friendship Rd., Howell, NJ 07731
Brazil, PO Box 1274, Muncie, IN 47308
BYO Records, PO Box 67609, Los Angeles CA 90067
Captain Tonic, PO Box 420393, San Francisco, CA 94142-0393
Cargo Music, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432
Casa Recording Co., 4509 Interlake Ave N, #305, Seattle, WA 98103
Chocolate Industries, no contact info available
Chrome St. Magnus, Am Bahnhof St. Magnus 10, 28759 Bremen, Germany
Compost Records, Haager Str. 10, D-81671, Munich, Germany
Confined Records, 807 North Maple Street, Eaton, OH 45320
Conquer The World Records, PO Box 40282 Redford MI 48240
Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 2T3
Deaddroid Records, PO Box 68061, Grand Rapids, MI 49516
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Devil in the Woods Records, PO Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357
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D-text Records, no contact info available
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Scene Police, Humboldtstrasse 15, 53115 Bonn, Germany
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Sequence Records, 588 Broadway, Suite 1003, New York, NY 10012
Side One Dummy Recs, 6201 Sunset Blvd. #211, Hollywood, CA 90028
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Soft Skull Press, 98 Suffolk no. 3A, NCY, NY 10002
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Where: April 13, 2002
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Info: www.democracyrising.org

2002 NORML Conference
When: April 18-20, 2002
Where: San Francisco
Info: www.norml.org or 888-67-NORML

National Mobilization on Columbia
When: April 19-22, 2002
Where: Washington, DC
Info: www.colombiamobilization.org

Anti-Capitalist Convergence: Autonomous Festivals of Resistance
When: April 26-May 1, 2002
Where: San Fran, Bay Area, CA
Info: www.festivalsofresistance.org

Northeast Summit for New Drug Policies
When: April 27-28, 2002
Where: Middletown, CT
Info: 860.658.4350 or thaley@wesleyan.edu

No Star Wars: International Space Organizing Conference & Protest
Where: May 10-12, 2002
Where: Berkeley, California
Info: www.globenet.free-online.co.uk

Mother's Day Against Veal
When: May 12, 2002
Where: Nationwide
Info: www.noveal.org or 607-292-3030

North American Anarchist Gathering
When: June 6-9, 2002
Where: Lawrence, Kansas
Info: www.prague-index.org/naag/

4th Annual Underground Publishing Conference
When: June 22-23, 2002
Where: Bowling Green, Ohio
Info: www.clamormagazine.org/upc/

G8 Protests
When: June 26-28, 2002
Where: Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada
Info: <http://g8.activist.ca/>

35th World Vegetarian Congress
When: July 8-14, 2002
Where: Edinburgh, Scotland
Info: www.ivu.org/congress/2002/

4th National Harm Reduction Conference: "Taking Drug Users Seriously"
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Canned Hunts Exposed

(HUNTS, continued from page 47)

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This article was adapted by Norm Phelps from Canned Hunts: Unfair at any Price, by Diana Norris and Norm Phelps of The Fund for Animals, and D. J. Schubert of Schubert and Associates. For a copy of the full report, contact The Fund for Animals at Suite 301, 8121 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910 or visit The Fund's website at www.fund.org.

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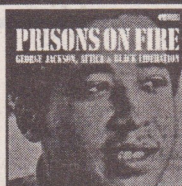
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<http://www.api4animals.org/>

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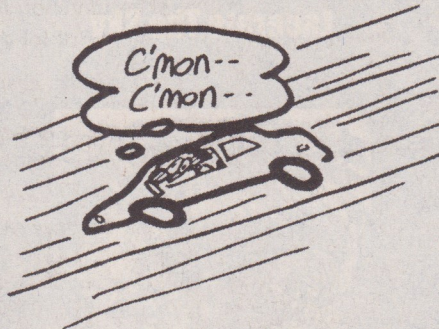
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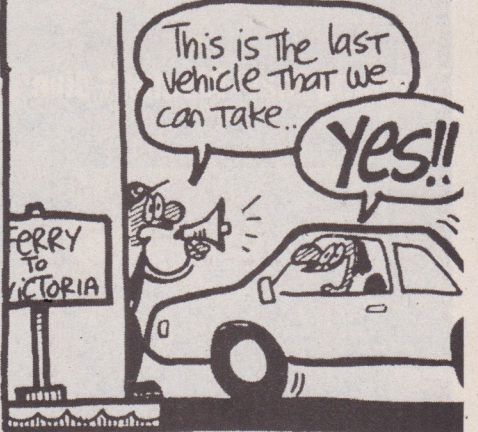
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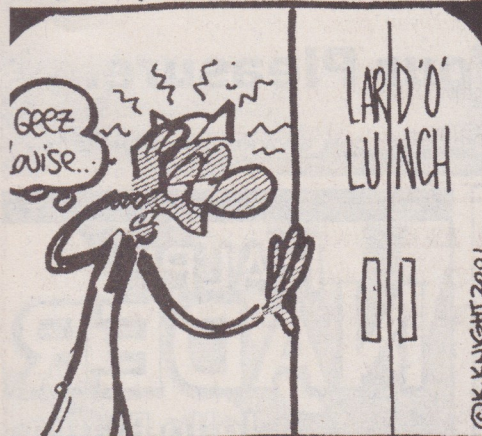
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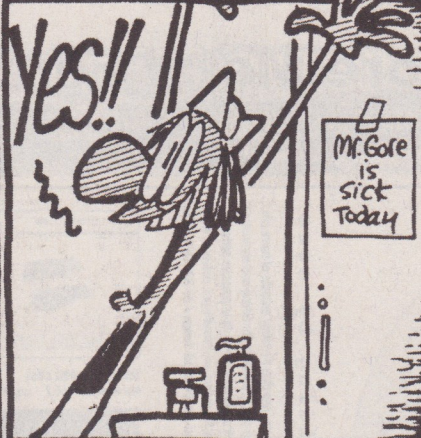
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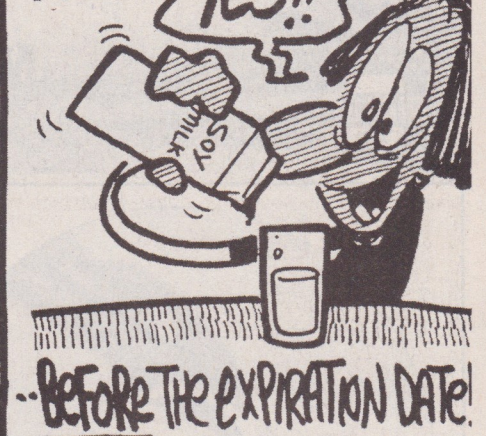
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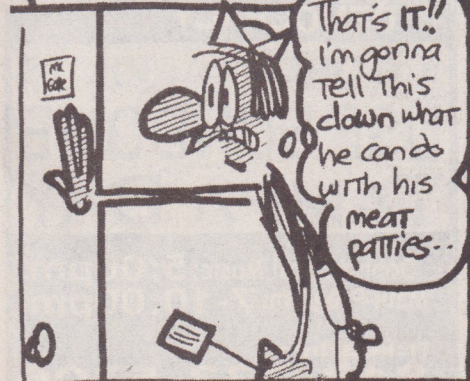
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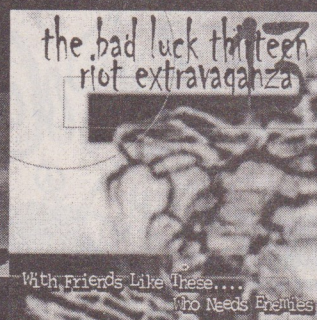
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Dying
for a
Cigarette

issue #37

Issue #31, February/March '01, Cover Story: Ripe for Revolt - Building a New Left - Also: Global Warming Heats Up and U.S. Runs From Kitchen; Pigs at the Trough - The Corporate Welfare State in America

Issue #30, December '00/January '01, Cover Story: Did Jesus Exist and Does It Matter? - Also: Have You Had Your Ritalin Today?; Trading With The Enemy; Confessions of an Ex-Bodybuilder

Issue #29, October/November '00, Cover Story: Attacking America's Greatest Enemy - The Bloated Military Budget - Also: Vaccine Conspiracy - Health of Profit? (**OUT OF PRINT!**)

Issue #28, August/September '00, Cover Story: Genetic Engineering - What's In It For Me and You? - Also: The Deadly Truth Behind Greyhound Racing; The Spaceman Cometh - Corporate Rule & Control

Issue #27, June/July '00, Cover Story: Truth on Trial - Why Capital Punishment Deserves to Die - Also: A Political Solution to Medical Errors; Unholy Alliance - The CIA and Fascist Terrorists

Issue #26, April/May '00, Cover Story: Censorship, Alive and Well in the U.S. - Also: Rape Shield Laws - Who Needs Protecting?; Antisocial Security: Your Personal Info Is At Risk

IMPACT



issue #36

Issue #25, February/March '00, Cover Story: Vowing for Equality - Same Sex Marriages - Also: Big Brother Broadcasts the Nightly News; The Fruits of Facism - CIA-Socialism in Chile

Issue #24, December/January '99-00, Cover Story: Creationism - Monkeying With Science Education - Also: Articles by two death row inmates; Senate to World: "Screw You!"; Racism in U.S. colleges

Issue #23, October/November '99, Cover Story: Big House of Horrors - Abuse In America's Jails - Also: The Religious Left - A Moral Balancing Act; America is Selling Out Taiwan; TJ Walker columns

Issue #22, August/September '99, Cover Story: Prisoners of Conscience - US Political Prisoners - Also: Space Exploration & Exploitation; America's Ritual Genocide of Iraq

Issue #21, June/July '99, Cover Story: Imprisoning the Mind - Art Censorship in America - Also: Facing 30; Death with Dignity or a .22; A Patriotic Left

Issue #20, Apr/May '99, Cover Story: The Chaining of America - Also: The Death Penalty - Reassessing the Punishment; School of the Americas: Training Foreign Killers

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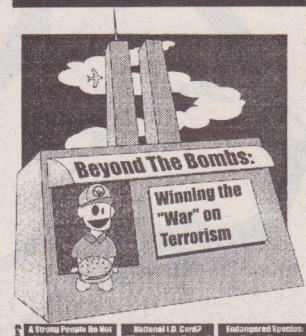
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